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SURVEY

A JOURNAL of SOVIET and EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

RUSSIA AND GERMANY

OCTOBER 1962

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RUSSIA AND GERMANY

Walter Laqueur

'I SAY, as Voltaire said of God, that if there were no Germans we should have to invent them, since nothing so successfully unites the Slavs as a rooted hatred of the Germans.' Thus Bakunin, exactly one hundred years ago, in a letter to his sister-in-law. A love-hate relationship unique perhaps in history has prevailed between Russia and Germany over many centuries; from the time when Alexander Nevski defeated the Teutonic Knights on Lake Peipus to the days of the Warsaw pact, every now and then Germany has been branded as the enemy par excellence.

But there was no nation the Russians admired more; the Germans were the masters, the teachers, the ideal to be imitated by successive generations of young Russian intellectuals. The romantic hero of the Russian novel was often more German than Russian in character. Of Lenski (in *Eugene Onegin*) it is said that he studied in Germany, that he was an admirer of Kant, and grew up as a poet under the skies of Schiller and Goethe. From distant Germany he brought home the fruits of scholarship, dreams of freedom, a burning and questioning spirit, a passionate language, and long dark locks of hair. German influence extended from the far left to the extreme right; even pronounced Germanophobes like Bakunin and Herzen had been shaped by it in their formative years. Pobedonostsev, we are reliably told, always carried around with him a copy of Goethe's *Faust*.

There was a similar ambivalence in German attitudes; traditional fear of Russia mixed with contempt. Friedrich II was afraid of the Russians who (he wrote to his brother in 1769) ' dans un demi siècle feront trembler tout l'Europe ' (which did not prevent him from using Russian assistance at the most critical turning point in his war). Ranke taught that there was a great and unbridgeable divide between West and East, and he has had his followers. Marx and Engels were very much children of their time in their negative judgments on Russian history—not just on the Tsarist government. But this was by no means the only trend in German public opinion: the conservatives who regarded Russia as a bulwark against revolutionary movements (the Russian alliance is our last refuge, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV told the brothers Gerlach); Bismarck and the other *Real-Politiker* who regarded Russia as Germany's natural ally; Nietzsche, for whom Russia was the very antithesis of ' European particularism and nervousness ', and who regarded the integration of the German and the Slavic races as the most desirable prospect for the future. The ideological proponents of a German-Russian alliance were by no means to be found only on the extreme right—there is a whole chain of thinkers, from Bruno Bauer, an early friend of Marx, to Thomas Mann (during the first world war) and the national-bolsheviks of Weimar Germany, who regarded the common rejection of the West as a firm basis for such an alliance. ' Are

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the Russian and the German attitudes towards Europe, Western civilisation, and politics not closely akin? Haven't we Germans also our Slavophiles and Westerners?' Thus Thomas Mann in 1917.

The pro-Russian tradition in German politics goes back to the eighteenth century. Russia's struggle against Napoleon in alliance with Prussia and Austria made it Germany's saviour; 'Tauroggen', the little place in Eastern Prussia where General York von Wartenburg reached an agreement with the Russians in 1812 without authorisation from his king, has ever since been a catchword in German politics; together with 'Rapallo' it is now frequently used by the east German communists—but not only by them. From Tauroggen there is a direct line to Bismarck's coalition with Russia. There is an influential school of German historians which maintains that the day when the alliance with Russia was permitted to lapse was the most fateful in German history.

There was a school of thought, too, which from the time of the wars against Napoleon, and particularly after 1850, favoured an *Ostorientierung*. The inclination towards close collaboration between Russians and Germans was to be found over the entire political spectrum, from the extreme right to the radical left. The organs of the extreme right in Wilhelmian Germany, such as the *Staatsbürgerzeitung* (and even the *Kreuzzeitung*) used to take much of their ideological fare, and even much of their news, from the Russian *Novoe Vremya*, and vice versa; collaboration between Russian and German anti-Semites was particularly close. 'We are proud to have provided ideological weapons to our friends in the neighbouring country', wrote one of the racialist German newspapers around the turn of the century. The 'ideological weapon' was the famous 'Chief Rabbi' speech at the Jewish cemetery in Prague, which in a more accomplished and embellished form returned to Germany in 1919 as the even more famous 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion' and began their triumphal travels throughout the world from Berlin. During the first world war Dubrovin, head of the 'Black Hundreds', declared that the victory of the Hohenzollerns would be a far lesser evil than the victory of democracy in Russia.

Collaboration on the left was even closer. The Russian socialists looked up to their German comrades as their guides and mentors and frequently as the arbiters in their internal quarrels. Russian was the language into which some of the works of Marx and Engels were first translated. Nowhere were they more avidly read or their prescriptions more zealously observed. Right up to the outbreak of the first world war Berlin was the main source of inspiration for the various Russian socialist factions; many a Soviet historian has been in trouble for recalling that there was no basic quarrel between Lenin and Kautsky before 1914, and it is well known what exclusive importance the Russian bolsheviks attached after 1917 to the outbreak of the German revolution, which they regarded as of greater importance than their own.

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NOT all Russians thought the Germans were demi-gods. The very fact that successive Tsars introduced so many innovations from Germany produced a hostile reaction. As far back as the seventeenth century Yuri Krizhanich, the precursor of Panslavism, opposed the introduction of the 'crazy' customs and manners of the Germans that were to replace the time-honoured and praiseworthy customs and institutions of Russia. The appointment of so many Germans to leading positions during the eighteenth century provoked more resentment; General Ermolaev's reply when Alexander I asked him to name his own reward for his services is well remembered: 'Sire, do make me a German . . .' Nesselrode and Wrangel, Giers and Lieven, Benckendorff and Kleinmichel, Plehve and Neidhart, Rennenkampf and Kauffmann, virtually took over the Russian foreign service and the civil administration. They had a strong position in the army and even infiltrated the Holy Synod. On a lower social level there were the Swabian settlers and many German artisans in the big cities. The contempt of the Russian nobleman for the petty-bourgeois Germans whose own orderly, pedantic ways were so diametrically opposed to his own *shirokaya natura*, are admirably expressed in Gogol's *Nevski Prospekt*: 'Schiller [at the age of twenty] had already planned his future in a most thorough and methodical way and never, in any circumstances, did he deviate from the course he had set himself. He resolved to get up at seven, to lunch at two, to be punctual in everything, and to get drunk every Sunday. He resolved to save a capital sum of fifty thousand and this was as certain and irrevocable as fate itself . . . In no circumstances did he increase his expenses and if the price of potatoes went up, he did not spend a penny more on them, but merely bought less potatoes . . . His exactness was such that he made it a rule never to kiss his wife more than twice in twenty-four hours and to make sure he did not kiss her three times he never put more than one teaspoonful of pepper in his soup'. Such judgments were fairly typical in Russian nineteenth-century literature. The practical, efficient, and energetic Stolz in *Oblomov* is at the same time hopelessly uninteresting and flat—very much in contrast to the hero of the book. Perhaps the most savage attack on the *Russkie Nemtsy* was made by Herzen (in a series of articles in *Kolokol*, starting October 1859), in which they were described as arrogant, brutal, evil, and unwilling and unable to understand Russia and the Russians. This German upper class was convinced that '*s nashim bratom nichevo bez palki ne sdelaesh*'; '*Man muss der Bestie den Russen herausschlagen*'.

But this contempt did not extend to German culture. If Tolstoi and Dostoevsky were more widely read in Germany than in any other Western country, the impact in Russia of German philosophy, literature, and the arts (from Schelling to Johann Strauss) was unique. That the Westerners were very strongly influenced we know from Herzen and many of his contemporaries, but the Slavophiles, too, and those who later on adopted as their watchword '*Pora domoi*', received their first impulse

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from Germany, however loath they were to admit it.[1] Russia led the world in book publishing—34,000 titles in 1914; it was first, also, in translating books, and among the translations German had an almost unrivalled position.

The Russian intelligentsia was more alert to all that was new and progressive and fashionable in Germany than the German intellectuals themselves. There was a psycho-analytical institute in Moscow before there was one in London or New York. Germany was not exactly the centre of modern painting, and yet many Russian painters were drawn there rather than to France; Kandinsky moved to Munich in the nineties, Lissitsky and others followed. The traffic was not one-way. After two extensive trips to Russia around the turn of the century, Rilke began to write poems in Russian, and in 1902 he wrote to Lou Andreas Salome: 'That Russia is my homeland is one of the great and mysterious certainties in my life'. Christian Morgenstern went on record at about the same time with similar sentiments, and the Russian influence on German expressionism was so pronounced that hardly any critic of the day failed to note it; the transition from impressionism to expressionism, they said, is the transition from West to East.

THEN came the war and the revolution. Nicky and Willie, who had written each other so many and such affectionate letters, disappeared. But the Eastern orientation remained a very important factor in both German domestic and foreign politics. In Soviet thinking, too, a special place was reserved for Germany from the very beginning. The German proletariat, Lenin wrote in his farewell letter to the Swiss workers in April 1917, was the 'most faithful and reliable ally of the Russian and international proletarian revolution'. Radek in Berlin in 1919 did not find it difficult to make converts to his thesis that Russia and Germany now had more common interests than ever, and that the logic of history compelled them to work together—not against each other. The Western Allies wanted to keep them apart. At the Versailles peace conference Lloyd George had circulated a confidential memorandum:

> The greatest danger that I see in the present situation is that Germany may throw in her lot with Bolshevism and place her resources, her brains, her vast organising power at the disposal of the revolutionary fanatics whose dream is to conquer the world for Bolshevism by force of arms. This danger is no mere chimera.

Clemenceau was not impressed, but Rathenau was, though he did not take the revolutionary nonsense very seriously. Prussia, after all, was the kernel of Germany, and Prussia had always gravitated towards the East; this pull towards the East had been tempered only by the fear of being overwhelmed by the Russian colossus. But as the result of the

[1] Samarin was quite open about it: 'To every Russian who has studied there, at least in my time, Germany is also a kind of motherland whose milk has long nourished them.'

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war and the civil war Russia had been very much weakened and there was no immediate danger. True, there was the fear of communism. 'We are on the eve of the German October', *Pravda* had written in December 1917. 'History is repeating itself; Berlin streets look like Petrograd streets on the eve of the revolution.' But history did not repeat itself. The Spartakist revolt failed and thus the way was opened to Rapallo, to German-Soviet economic exchanges, to military collaboration between the Reichswehr and the Red Army. Rathenau and Brockdorff-Rantzau, Seeckt and Krupp (who was one of the first to supply machines to Russia), all reached the conclusion that a revision of the Versailles treaty could be achieved only through collaboration with Russia. This was not the policy of the social-democrats, but among some of the centre parties and in particular those on the extreme right, Russia became very fashionable indeed. When Lenin wrote that 'Even the blackest reactionaries and monarchists in Germany said that the Red Army would save them', he was reporting fairly accurately the state of affairs at the time of the Soviet-Polish war.

This re-orientation in foreign policy had its ideological and cultural parallels. There was a Dostoevsky boom, the like of which had not been witnessed before, and some shrewd observers realised that it had something to do with current politics. Moeller van den Bruck developed his theories about the right of the young peoples and their coming victorious struggle against the decadent West; Moeller by a strange coincidence was the German translator of Dostoevsky. Ernst Niekisch, mentor of the national-bolshevists, preached a synthesis between the spirit of Potsdam and the spirit of Moscow, and declared war on Rome, Paris, and places west.

For Spengler, Russia was the only country which had a future, unlike America and the European states. But Spengler leads us to the Third Reich and the nazis, who, as we all know, were bitter opponents of Russia. As Goebbels put it at the *Reichsparteitag* in 1936: 'From the very first hour of our political thinking we have carried on the struggle against this world danger with utter ruthlessness'. Goebbels' memory was short: eleven years before he had written a widely discussed article, 'The Russian problem', in a periodical edited by Gregor Strasser, which was very much in line with the ideas then held by the national-bolshevists: 'Russia is our natural ally against the devilish temptations and the corruption of the West'. He was called to order by Alfred Rosenberg, then still the party's chief ideologue, whose hatred of all things Russian was indeed above suspicion. Rosenberg's *obiter dicta* about Russia and communism are found in the *Mythos* and in countless brochures and booklets: Bolshevism is the revolt of the Jewish and Mongolian races against the German (aryan) element in Russia; it is the revolt of the steppe, the hatred of the nomads for everything great, heroic, racially healthy; all big things in Russian history had been achieved by Germans or those of German blood, but the revolution of 1917 had exterminated

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the aryan element. A *rapprochement* with Russia was out of the question; the Germany of the day was not a German Reich, strong and self-confident, nor did the Jewish Soviet government represent the Russian people. As far as the nazi ideologists were concerned, all leading Soviet statesmen were Jews; Lenin and Tomsky, Lunacharsky and Rakovsky, Kuibyshev and Krasin, Beria and Manuilsky among them. Whoever was not a Jew was a Chinese. Rosenberg developed an elaborate theory about the leading role of Chinese silk merchants in the Russian revolution. While other observers of the Soviet scene engaged in political speculation and social analysis, the nazis' Russian experts were preoccupied with another kind of scientific investigation which hardly left them time for anything else: they tracked down the 'real' (Jewish) names of all Soviet leaders; Lunacharsky, for instance, became Mondschein; for who did not know that 'luna' was 'moon' in Latin? This, by and large, was the level of nazi Sovietology.

HITLER himself as a young man had imbibed the traditional feelings of superiority vis-à-vis the Slavs. He was very much influenced in the early twenties by the Balts in his party (such as Alfred Rosenberg and Scheubner-Richter), who told him that bolshevism was not an ideology but a Judaeo-Masonic conspiracy. This fitted in well with his prejudices and simplified matters; it made an ideological confrontation unnecessary. Russia and bolshevism were to be exterminated. Yet he had a sneaking admiration for Stalin, as will be readily seen from his *Table Talk*; whenever he wanted to commend a particularly intransigent and militant party member (such as, for instance, Roland Freisler, the German Vyshinsky), he called him a 'real bolshevik'. The alliance of twenty-one months in 1939–41 produced strange results on both sides; Goebbels, in his (secret) instructions to the German press, ordered the German-Russian reconciliation to be described as 'total and final', and Mr Molotov talked about a friendship that had been cemented in blood. Ribbentrop cabled home from Moscow that he had been given a royal welcome and felt himself 'among old party comrades'.

But in the end Hitler's intuition prevailed; the German army got marching orders and the SS got its way with the doctrine of the *Untermensch*. The results are known.

Nazi-communist relations from the late twenties are a study in misunderstanding. The nazis refused to understand what communism was all about; the Russians analysed and discussed at great length 'German fascism'—they did not like the term 'nazism' or 'national-socialism'. But they were hopelessly wrong about it from beginning to end. They regarded it as the praetorian guard of monopoly capitalism, and Hitler as the instrument of Thyssen; when Thyssen was sent packing, this was just too bad for the facts—it was theory that mattered. They never even began to understand that national-socialism was a real mass movement, that extreme German nationalism had an enormous appeal and

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was a political factor of the very greatest importance, that Hitler was nobody's servant, and that in a totalitarian state the economy too is directed from above. They really seem to have thought that the German workers (and perhaps the peasants too) would soon be up in arms against Hitler; they failed to realise what should have been clear from their own experience, that a totalitarian state with its monopoly of the means of mass communication and indoctrination could easily succeed in neutralising the great majority of the population and winning over large numbers to active collaboration with the regime. It was no accident (to borrow a phrase from the communist jargon of the time) that Stalin was not prepared in June 1941.

In the West there has been since the second world war an enormous literature on Hitler and nazism; too much, perhaps, in particular at the popular level. There has been a certain morbid fascination with certain aspects of nazism, as some observers have rightly noted. In the Soviet Union not a single book dealing with the nazi regime, the party, its leaders, the SS, the Gestapo, the concentration camps, has been published—strictly speaking there is not even a history of Germany covering that period (apart from lecture courses—such as those by Kulbakin and Rozanov). It would be fascinating to go in some detail into the real reasons for this apparent reluctance to deal with nazism and the Third Reich.

THE Russians were unprepared for the German onslaught in June 1941 in more than one sense. Sholokhov, in his *Nauka Nenavisti*, has described the shock experienced by Soviet citizens when they realised that the behaviour of the Germans in the occupied territories was very far indeed from their traditional image of the civilised and orderly German; they could not at first believe the news about mass killings, mass robbery, and brutal oppression. They had always held the Germans in special esteem (as Stalin had told Emil Ludwig in a famous interview: the Germans were solid, reliable, sober people who could be trusted). There had been some anti-fascist literature, novels by Feuchtwanger, Friedrich Wolff, and Bredel (temporarily withdrawn from circulation in 1939), and the Soviet newspapers announced from time to time that the Communist party and the working class of Germany were subject to severe persecution. But according to bolshevik dogma the working class and the communist parties of all capitalist countries had to suffer, so there was perhaps not so much to choose between Hitler and Daladier and Chamberlain and FDR.

These misconceptions were rudely shattered during the first months of war. Alexei Tolstoi and Ilya Ehrenburg became the spokesmen of the new line, though Ehrenburg was restrained during the last phase of the war. On the German side, meanwhile, the most unbridled racial chauvinism prevailed, of which the famous *Untermensch* brochure is a perfect illustration.

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WHEN the war ended the Soviet Union emerged as one of the two strongest powers in the world, whereas divided Germany had ceased to exist as a major active factor in world politics. Its eastern third was gradually absorbed into the Soviet bloc, while west Germany joined NATO. Soon Russia was to become a nuclear power; as far as Moscow was concerned the German danger had ceased to exist. West Germany was now but a small and vulnerable country in the centre of Europe that could be wiped out by half a dozen bombs. And yet the German menace continued to exist for some of the Western Slavs who feared that a strengthening of Germany could somehow bring about a change in the status quo on its eastern frontiers. German *revanchism* also remained a favourite talking point for some British and American observers, who chose to interpret Soviet policy in Germany as a purely defensive reaction provoked by the fear of a Germany seeking revenge. The Russians were probably not displeased that such an impression had been created in some quarters abroad. They regarded Germany as the greatest postwar prize to be won in Europe. Stalin was willing to forgive the Germans; in 1949 he wrote to the east Berlin comrades that Russia and Germany had suffered more than any other country during the war and close cooperation had become imperative. As he had said earlier, Hitlers come and go, but Germany remains. But east Germany proved a disappointing starting point for winning over the whole of Germany. Soon it became all too obvious that the borders in Central Europe could be changed only as the result of a new war.

Even so, Germany continued to be of importance in Soviet foreign policy in two ways: If the Germans were so deeply concerned about German unity, the argument ran, very well then, they could have their unity—at a price. For several years Soviet declarations about German unity remained ambiguous; only comparatively recently has it been stated that German unity is both impractical and undesirable. In these circumstances the potential 'Russian party' in west Germany received a fatal blow even before it had asserted itself; there was to be no new Rapallo or Tauroggen, notwithstanding Mr Kroll's persuasiveness—the Russians were not willing to play. They could not sacrifice Ulbricht, nor were they able to disregard the susceptibilities of their brother Slavs in Warsaw and Prague.

If no positive use could be made of Germany as an ally, it still retained a certain negative value; it could be used as a deterrent to frighten off other countries. The astonishing economic comeback after the war had made west Germany a serious competitor of other Western countries on world markets. In addition, there were the bitter memories of the war years and of German atrocities; it did not need much to fan anti-German resentment. At the best of times the Germans had not been noted for tact; too many of them were now proposing, too loud and too soon, to let bygones be bygones. There was a chain reaction: in

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England some of the appeasers of the nazi Germany of 1936–39 joined the appeasers of 1939–41 (or their spiritual heirs) in a hate-Germany front from which only east Germany and the Leipzig Fair were exempt.

IT would be comforting to report that German thinking on Russia has undergone a radical change, that of the old German feelings of superiority vis-à-vis the Slavs (German *Ordnung* versus Slavic *Schlamperei*) have disappeared. This, of course, is not so, and honest reappraisals of what went wrong in German-Slav relations (and in German history in general) are still all too infrequent. True, the shock of 1945 has made the Germans painfully aware of their own weakness vis-à-vis Russia; no more '*Nach Ostland wollen wir reiten*'. But West German politicians have too long feared they would be branded as 'unpatriotic' and have avoided facing the new realities squarely. Thus, unwittingly, they have often played into the hands of communist propagandists, both because of their reluctance to accept the territorial consequences of Hitler's war in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and because of their indulgence towards officials tainted with a nazi past. It is true that in the perspective of 1945 the eradication of this nazi past has gone further than could at that time have been realistically expected. But that does not alter the fact that too many Germans still prefer to attribute the responsibility for all that happened to Churchill and Roosevelt, the war-mongers, rather than to themselves and their own leaders (and in this they have recently received some unexpected support from certain quarters in America and England). This is true largely only for some of the warhorses of the older generation, in whom a basic change of heart was not in any case to be expected. The younger generation is more promising and deserves that the West should follow their attempts at democratic regeneration with both sympathy and active support.

The present number of *Survey* tries to provide the historical and topical background to German-Russian relations, an issue that has remained of cardinal importance in world politics at a time when the traditional German *Drang nach Osten* has been reversed into a Russian *Drang nach Westen*. The present drive to get the West out of Berlin shows that the seventeen-year-old battle for Germany has again entered an acute stage.

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REALITY AND ILLUSION IN SOVIET-GERMAN RELATIONS

Melvin Croan

I

THE DREARY persistence of Germany as an object of competition and an arena of confrontation between East and West throughout the entire post-World War II period has all but robbed 'the German question' of the fascination that, for example, often seems to attend the uncharted possibilities of the 'underdeveloped nations' in world affairs. Yet, precisely because of the duration of the confrontation and the intensity of the competition, few students of contemporary international politics would deny the continued importance of Germany to what, in the absence of a more precise abbreviation, may still be designated the balance of power.

Certainly, the attentiveness of Soviet policy-makers to German developments stands beyond dispute. The new edition of the official Soviet *Diplomatic Dictionary* devotes almost twenty double-columned pages to the 'German Question'.[1] That highly authoritative source informs its readers that 'the German question has been over the space of the many years since the end of the second world war the object of acute political struggle, since according to the basis and method by which it is solved will depend not only the future of the German people but to a significant degree the future of Europe, of peace, and the security of peoples'.[2] And no less astute an observer and involved a participant than N. S. Khrushchev, in a recent interview with an American editor, Gardner Cowles, commented that although 'the problem of disarmament for the USSR and the United States is problem number one', there existed 'one other question, which seems to depend on disarmament, but can in itself be an issue of primary importance. This is the question of Germany'.[3]

Whether one agrees with Khrushchev or not, great difficulties arise when political analysts, no less than policy-makers and polemicists on both sides, undertake to elaborate upon the nature of the German problem, or for that matter, to investigate its origins. Some Western commentators, for example, have expressed the conviction that over the years Moscow has been pressing a consistent and preconceived plan of action in Germany. Unfortunately, the reading back of events required to support their conclusion does considerable violence to the canons of the

1 'Germanskii vopros', *Diplomaticheskii slovar*, Vol. I (Moscow, 1960), pp. 370–389.
2 Ibid. p. 370.
3 *An Interview with Nikita Khrushchev by Gardner Cowles, Editor, Look Magazine*, Moscow, 20 April 1962, p. 22. Cf. also the dispatch by Seymour Topping some weeks earlier, 'Soviet Puts Top Priority on German Accord as Key World Issue', *New York Times*, 3 April 1962.

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historian's craft. Any judgment to the effect that Soviet policy, while pursuing minimal aims leading to the bolshevisation of East Germany, has all the while set as its maximum goal the winning over of the entire country to communism represents, at best, an extremely flaccid and rather misleading hypothesis. Once accepted, such a generalisation necessarily tends to obscure rather than to clarify the many complexities and ambiguities of Soviet behaviour.[4] Similarly, the remark attributed to Stalin, *anno* 1948, that Germany would remain divided because ' the West will make Western Germany their own, and we shall turn Eastern Germany into our own state ',[5] may perhaps be taken as an expression of the old dictator's powers of prescience and prophecy; as historical testimony it scarcely exhausts even the relatively simple springs of Stalinist policy toward Germany.

Apart from large generalisations as to motives and small scraps of dubious evidence, what is striking is the remarkable parallelism in the direction, timing, and pace of the separate emergence of both East and West Germany in the post-war world. By relating the formal diplomatic record to the political dynamics of this process, it does become possible to suggest that the quest of Soviet diplomacy to delay if not actually to prevent Bonn's military contribution to NATO and to frustrate West Germany's integration into the West European economic and political community has been fatally handicapped by Khrushchev's deepening commitment to the communist regime in East Germany. That rather simple point is absolutely crucial for an adequate understanding of diplomatic relations between Moscow and Bonn. Upon it there has also hinged another important, although less immediately obvious, consequence, for the very existence of the same Ulbricht regime has played no small role in impeding Bonn's search for an active *Ostpolitik* of its own.

II

IN RETROSPECT it is clear that, once unloosed by real or imagined fears of developments on the other side, the separate but parallel train of events in each part of Germany rapidly generated its own forward momentum. The failure of incipient four-Power arrangements governing the whole of Germany gave a fillip to an ever more intensive pursuit of disruptive purposes within both parts of the truncated country. Gradual dismantling of the structure of military government, especially after the establishment of the German Federal Republic in the Western zones of occupation and the German Democratic Republic in the Soviet zone, led to the progressive transfer of the juridical forms of national sovereignty to each German state. This process, however, was inextricably linked

[4] This is not to deny that the thesis in question does have its policy uses. Thus it is prominently featured in West German analyses which support Adenauer's foreign policy. See, e.g., Werner Erfurt (pseudonym), *Die Sowjetrussische Deutschland-Politik* (Esslingen, 1959).

[5] Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (New York, 1962), p. 153.

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to their separate integration into the antagonistic alliance systems which have so decisively shaped the political contours of post-war Europe. The sole qualitative distinction—a crucial one of enormous political importance, in view of the similarity of sequence on both sides—exists thanks to the support afforded to Western policies and commitments by a freely elected West German government. This, of course, has enabled the West to claim for itself the democratic legitimacy denied to the communist dictatorship in East Germany.

Predictably, the Soviet side has remained entirely impervious to such Western claims. Indeed, the initial reaction of Soviet spokesmen—and therefore of the East German communists as well—towards the mere establishment of a West German government was one of intense hostility. Vilification as venomous as its phraseology was lurid greeted the announcement of the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany. For several years after its establishment in May 1949, Moscow even exhibited a reluctance to call the German Federal Republic by its proper name. Instead, Stalinist etiquette dictated the use of such pejorative nomenclature as 'the puppet Bonn regime', 'German slaves of the Americans', 'the so-called Chancellor', or—in a somewhat more restrained although scarcely more respectful mood—simply, 'the West German state'.[6]

By contrast, the proclamation of the founding of the German Democratic Republic (DDR) in October 1949 was marked by the warmest Soviet congratulations and the expression by Stalin himself of high personal hopes for the future of Germany—in close alliance with the USSR.[7] Note that the emergence of the DDR was pre-eminently an act of international politics, prompted by the failure of Soviet diplomacy to prevent the formation of the Federal Republic. Although the event did accelerate the communist transformation of East German society, the achievement by the German communists of a semblance of a state structure was not necessarily intended to serve that particular end. The point is suggested by the simultaneous establishment in October 1949 of the National Front of Democratic Germany, whose initial purpose was less to consolidate communist power under the guise of a multi-party bloc inside East Germany than to conduct forays into the realm of German nationalism beyond the borders of the fledgling East German state. The antecedents of the National Front run back to the Soviet-sponsored National Committee of Free Germany during World War II. Both the National Front as a political manoeuvre and the Democratic Republic as a state form

[6] Cf. the comments of Alfred Grosser, *Die Bonner Demokratie* (Düsseldorf, 1960), pp. 51–52.

[7] *Cf.* Stalin's telegram of congratulation to Wilhelm Pieck, 13 October 1949, in which Stalin asserted: 'The founding of a democratic and peace-loving German republic is a turning point in the history of Europe. There can be no doubt that the existence of a peace-loving democratic Germany alongside the peace-loving Soviet Union will exclude the possibility of a new war in Europe, will end blood-letting in Europe, and will render impossible the enslavement of the European countries by world imperialism.' *Dokumente zur Aussenpolitik der Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, Vol. I (Berlin, 1954), p. 232.

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trace their immediate origins to the People's Congress movement of 1947–48 which, under Soviet auspices and communist control, represented itself as an embryonic all-German parliament and on that basis had laid claim to speak for the entire German nation on matters of international diplomacy.

The unrequited appeals of the National Front in West Germany portended a rather rapid eclipse of its importance as an instrument in the Soviet diplomatic armoury. Demonstration of the stability of the West German government in the face of nationalist blandishments, together with the announcement of plans, first broached by Secretary Acheson in September 1950, to raise a West German military contribution to the Western defence, redirected the thrust of the Soviet effort. In the interest of arousing Western fears of a reawakened German militarism, outcries *against* Germany tended to drown out entreaties *within* Germany. Propaganda appeals to the Germans were not, of course, entirely abandoned. The resulting contrapuntal orchestration has often been rather cacophonous; never more so than when, following the failure of Stalin's draft peace treaty of March 1952 to stir the West German imagination through its offer of a unified but neutralised Germany, Soviet remonstrations against the West German state and social order became noticeably more frenetic.

Whether it ever dawned upon Stalin and his lieutenants that the efficacy of Soviet diplomacy was being impaired by the absence of formal Soviet relations with Bonn, to say nothing of the iron Soviet grip over East Germany, cannot, of course, be known. In any case, the first feelers in the direction of establishing relations between Moscow and Bonn were put out only after Stalin's death. They came from none other than V. M. Molotov, who found occasion during the Conference of Foreign Ministers in Berlin (January–February 1954) to ruminate about 'possible contacts and ties' between the two governments. A year later, in January 1955, the Soviet government made its first formal offer to normalise relations with West Germany. The offer was enhanced by a declaration of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet terminating the state of war with Germany. It was also accompanied by a diplomatic proposal suggesting new possibilities for German reunification through internationally supervised elections. Like this Soviet proposal, however, the offer of direct relations with Bonn was tied to West German rejection of the Paris Agreements, under which the Federal Republic was scheduled to enter NATO.

If the diplomatic flurries of January 1955 made clear that the offer of formal relations between the USSR and West Germany was being extended as a Soviet concession for which payment in kind was asked of Bonn, six months later the Soviet regime suddenly suggested that the prospect of diplomatic relations had become something of value in itself. On 7 June 1955 the Soviet Embassy in Paris transmitted to the Embassy of the Federal Republic a note which proposed the establishment of diplomatic and trade relations without prior conditions. While the Soviet

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note did allude to 'a solution of unsolved questions which concern the whole of Germany', defined as 'the major all-national problem of the restoration of the unity of a German democratic state', its major purpose was to invite Chancellor Adenauer personally to visit Moscow in order to discuss the diplomatic and trade questions. Bonn accepted Moscow's invitation with a minimum of hesitation, even though alacrity should not, in this case, be confused with enthusiasm. Nonetheless, the visit of the Adenauer delegation to Moscow which took place between 8 and 13 September 1955 was certainly one of the high points of that year of the 'spirit of Geneva'. Despite difficult negotiations and a dramatic display of Khrushchev's passions,[8] Adenauer's mission to Moscow did result in the establishment of formal diplomatic relations and thus ushered in, or so at least some people seemed to think, a new era in Soviet-German relations.

III

DURING THE course of almost seven years of formal diplomatic relations between Moscow and Bonn, each capital has officially represented its own diplomacy towards the other as founded upon the bedrock of political realism. In point of fact, the two conceptions of political reality have totally diverged. The point of divergence is, of course, to be found in Pankow, for the more adamantly Moscow has insisted upon the reality of East Germany's existence as a permanent part of the German scene, the more strenuously has Bonn contested the assertion.

An exchange of letters between Bulganin and Adenauer during the first part of 1957 cast the disputed point in bold relief. Initiated on the Soviet side for the ostensible purpose of discovering practical steps to improve its formally correct but politically frigid relations with the Federal Republic, the correspondence almost immediately took the form of a dialogue at cross purposes on the nature of German political realities. Thus Bulganin:

> We regret very much the fact that the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany continues to regard it as impossible to come to a realistic and unbiased evaluation of the situation which has arisen due to the existence of two sovereign German states, each one of which has its own constitution, parliament, and government.[9]

And to Bulganin's complaint, this rejoinder from Adenauer:

> The striving of the whole German people for a restoration of its national unity cannot be done away with merely by calling upon the supposed existence of two German states. It is unrealistic to designate the so-called German Democratic Republic, whose state power did not come into being legitimately and which is rejected by the overwhelming majority of the population, as a reality in the

[8] See Klaus Mehnert's account, 'Der Kanzler in Moskau', *Osteuropa* (Stuttgart), December, 1955.

[9] For the full text see *Pravda*, 24 March 1957.

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> life of the German people. There is, however, one reality which is anchored in the historical development of Germany—the German people forms a single nation.[10]

Behind such strained diplomatic niceties there lies, quite visibly, the unresolved issue of German reunification. Any German government, whatever its political complexion, which professes to regard the division of the country as unnatural and to hold the Soviet Union primarily responsible for perpetuating that division, will perforce enjoy less than satisfactory relations with the USSR. It therefore has become a matter of quite practical political importance for commentators in Germany and elsewhere to try to ascertain whether Soviet policy has in fact abandoned serious interest in German reunification, and, if so, to pinpoint the date upon which that may have happened. Yet, if such an exercise does have political significance, as well as perhaps historical merit, it is that much the more important that it be entered upon with extreme caution. The consequence of any other approach may well be to foster irresponsible political recrimination.

Taken at their face value, formal Soviet pronouncements and the informal utterances of the Khrushchev leadership, not to mention recent Soviet policies, leave little doubt about the total lack of Soviet interest in German reunification, except perhaps on terms of its own choosing. That being the case, the question of when a negotiated settlement ceased to be a meaningful possibility gains in historical interest. Yet to try to search for an answer to so basic a question either in the fabric of Soviet diplomacy exclusively, or, alternatively, in the realm of communist policy within East Germany alone, will surely lead the sleuth astray.[11] If a credible answer exists at all, it must surely lie secreted somewhere near the very juncture of international diplomacy and internal politics.

On the admittedly fragile basis of incomplete evidence, what can be suggested is that from the Soviet point of view the issue of German reunification was quite dead, even if far from buried, at the time of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Moscow and Bonn. This was the case not only because the Soviets were saying so (at least as often as they were expressing their interest in contributing to a solution of the 'all-national German problem'), nor indeed because by mid-1955 the mould of NATO had frozen so hard that the Western powers could not contemplate the detachment of the Federal Republic, but even more importantly because the nature of the Soviet commitment to Ulbricht

[10] The full text may be found in the *Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamts der Bundesregierung*, 18 April 1957.

[11] Thus, limiting herself to circumstantial evidence relating to the inter-party struggle within the SED (East German Communist party), Miss Evelyn Anderson has suggested that 'most likely the final decision in favour of separatism was taken during or just after the international communist conference in Moscow in November 1957.' See her article in *Survey*, June 1962. The suggestion strikes the present writer as hypothetical in the extreme.

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had already transcended in importance the value which the Soviet leadership attached to luring West Germany out of NATO. A 'final decision' against German reunification through a negotiated settlement of the German problem as a whole was probably never taken as such in Moscow —any more than it was, say, in Washington. What amounted to the final decision, however, forced itself upon the Soviet leaders as early as 1953, in the wake of the June uprising in East Germany.

Surprisingly few observers have recognised the June rising for what it obviously was—a major watershed in Soviet-German relations. Instead, by turning to the record of formal diplomacy to the neglect of internal communist politics, they point either to Stalin's proposal of March 1952 or to the Soviet offer of January 1955 as 'missed opportunities'. It must be said that such conjecture is at least partially credible because, quite regrettably, on both occasions the Western position was so inflexible as to have precluded actual negotiation.

Certainly Stalin's offer of March 1952 still strikes one as intriguing. Whether the Soviet dictator actually preferred a neutral but united and armed Germany, as stipulated in the Soviet proposal—a Germany which most assuredly would have been non-communist—to West German rearmament within the then projected European Defence Community, is indeed a moot question. Allowing for such a preference, Stalin's ability to introduce the requisite flexibility into Soviet diplomacy was guaranteed—in every respect save one. If anything could have made the Soviet proposals of 1952 seem serious and feasible, it would have been a relaxation of the harsh totalitarian rule which had increasingly characterised the Soviet zone of Germany after 1949. Stalin may well have been incapable of realising the connection between the quality of rule inside East Germany and the effectiveness of Soviet appeals towards the whole of Germany. Or, again, the ingrained habits of Stalinist rule may not have been amenable to correction in the interests of diplomacy. Whatever the explanation, the preservation of Stalinist rule inside East Germany deprived Soviet diplomacy of the desired resonance. Indeed, as the exchange of notes between East and West unfolded during 1952, Stalinist totalitarianism in East Germany even intensified. The adoption by the second conference of the SED, meeting in July 1952, of a forced-draft programme for 'the construction of socialism' in the DDR sealed the doom of Stalin's diplomatic initiative of the previous March.

It fell to Stalin's successors to bring internal conditions inside East Germany into line with the expressed Soviet desire to prevent the rearmament of West Germany. Although preparation of East Germany's 'new course' of 1953 was doubtless prompted in the first instance by the utterly disastrous consequences of Ulbricht's programme of building socialism, the international implications of the softer domestic lines were not lost upon Soviet spokesmen. Thus, the organ of the Soviet High Commission in Germany, *Tägliche Rundschau* (13 June 1953), made a special point of stressing the 'great international significance' of the decisions to relax political pressure and to modify economic policy in the DDR,

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and expressed the conviction that 'decisive progress in the struggle for a peaceful reunification of Germany . . . will be made in the near future'. On the eve of the June rising, the interests of Soviet policy and those of the Ulbricht leadership of the SED were in obvious disalignment. Ulbricht's political programme had been discredited in the eyes of his Soviet patrons. What is more, there were unmistakable signs that the patronage itself was about to be withdrawn, that Ulbricht's downfall was being prepared. Whether all this was the work of Beria and his faction alone, as Ulbricht himself charged in public only recently,[12] the overwhelming weight of all the available evidence points to the twin conclusions that, in the early summer of 1953, major political changes were under way inside East Germany and that these changes would be followed by some new Soviet initiative on the German question as a whole.

The uprising of June 1953 must be evaluated in terms of what it did to the apparent divergence of interest between Moscow and Pankow. Had the Soviet Army not intervened on the morning of 17 June the SED regime would have been swept away. Hypothetically, this naked exposure of the intrinsic vulnerability of German communist rule might have persuaded the Soviet leadership to liquidate entirely its commitment in the DDR. That this did not occur cannot be explained by the fall of Beria alone, for the very success of the popular rising immediately realigned the vital interests of the entire Soviet leadership with those of the Ulbricht faction in the SED. Had the Soviets abandoned the SED regime at that point, it would have been more than an acknowledgment of the bankruptcy of communist rule in East Germany; it would have amounted to a confession of the weakness of the overall Soviet position in Central Europe. Had Soviet diplomacy agreed to negotiate German reunification from such a position, it could hardly have expected the Western powers to accept a single one of its previous conditions.

Ever since the events of June 1953, a primary concern of Soviet policy in Germany has been to shore up the Ulbricht regime. From the meeting between Soviet and East German government and party leaders, held in Moscow in August 1953, which terminated reparations and reduced occupation costs, right up to the underwriting of Ulbricht's Wall in Berlin and renewed Soviet credits in March 1962, there has been a steady and seemingly irreversible sequence of Soviet support, not only for the DDR as a separate German state and the SED as a fraternal communist party, but also for Ulbricht's personal leadership of the SED and his distinctively repressive brand of communist rule. The value of these tough internal practices in maintaining the Soviet position in Germany was demonstrated by Ulbricht's success in getting rid of his revisionist critics in 1956. In addition the SED party boss's necessary subservience to Moscow has made him a welcome ally in the disputes which have raged within the international communist household. And,

[12] Cf. the discussion in my article, 'East Germany: Lesson in Survival', *Problems of Communism* (Washington, D.C.), May–June 1962.

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finally, the regime over which Ulbricht presides, for all its economic tribulations, has developed into a valued trading partner for the Soviet Union and an important participant in the communist economic offensive in the underdeveloped world.

All these aspects must be borne in mind when considering the diplomatic fate of the German issue in the post-Stalinist period. In the light of the 1953 decision to rescue Ulbricht rather than abandon him, Molotov's intransigence over Germany at the 1954 Berlin Foreign Ministers' Conference becomes understandable. So too does the sluggishness of Soviet diplomacy when presented with another opportunity for blocking West German rearmament as the result of the collapse of EDC in the fall of 1954. Had the Soviets really considered sacrificing the DDR in order to neutralise the whole of Germany, renewed Soviet proposals for free all-German elections would certainly have been forthcoming long before they actually were. The expected offer came only in January 1955 —that is, *after* the Paris Agreements had been initialled and only after the announcement of the formation of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation; testimony to the continued hold over Soviet policy of the conservative reflex committed to maintaining the Ulbricht regime in power. The tenacity of established positions was further demonstrated at the Geneva Conference in the summer of 1955. Despite suggestions, encouraged by Soviet propagandists, that the Austrian State Treaty, concluded in April 1955, might serve as a 'model' for a German settlement, Bulganin's utterances at Geneva against any 'mechanical formulas' for solving the German problem amounted to a retraction of the previous expression of interest in free all-German elections. As such it anticipated the undisguised failure of the Foreign Ministers' Conference of October-November 1955 to achieve anything more than an exchange of incompatible points of view on the German question.

IV

BY THE TIME of the establishment of Soviet-West German diplomatic relations, then, Soviet policy had committed itself to the Ulbricht regime to a degree which far exceeded the nominal Soviet reiteration of the thesis of the 'separate existence of two German states'. However much Western spokesmen may have scoffed at the Soviet declaration of March 1954, conferring the status of a 'sovereign state' upon the DDR, or the joint Soviet-East German declaration of September 1955, prescribing the 'complete equality of rights, mutual respect of sovereignty, and non-interference in domestic affairs', they were powerless to influence the Soviet commitment which was hardening behind these formal trappings.

Khrushchev's remark to a high level French delegation, visiting Moscow in 1956, to the effect that the reality of seventeen million Germans under communist rule was preferable to the imponderables of seventy million Germans in a neutralised state, represented a disarmingly candid summation of an assessment which was doubtless reached three years earlier. Although in 1956 Soviet organs were quick to disclaim

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that Khrushchev had ever uttered any such thought, by 1959 Khrushchev was publicly lecturing an all-German workers conference, meeting in Leipzig, on the advantages afforded by the division of the country. At almost the same time Khrushchev was effectively discouraging Erich Ollenhauer, Carlo Schmid, and Fritz Erler from pressing, even before it was published, the Social-Democratic party's *Deutschlandplan* which envisaged the gradual demilitarisation and step-by-step reunification of Germany, on terms which were thought to respond to the needs of Soviet policy.

If one were to judge the creative talents of Soviet diplomacy in terms of its contributions in recent years to discussions concerning German reunification, the judgment would of necessity be overwhelmingly negative. Beyond the Soviet endorsement of an SED scheme for 'confederation' (not, it should be noted, reunification), there is little else to report. And the confederation formula, unveiled by Ulbricht at the end of 1956, harks back to proposals for an all-German Constituent Council, first presented by DDR Minister-President Otto Grotewohl as long ago as November 1950.[13] To make matters worse, Ulbricht's confederation scheme demands sweeping political and social changes in West Germany before the Federal Republic can even qualify as an acceptable confederation partner for the DDR. The entire scheme must be dismissed as an instrument of political warfare rather than accepted as a serious proposal for a solution of the German problem. Nonetheless, confederation appears in the most recent Soviet draft peace treaty for Germany. This is the draft published on 11 January 1959, in connection with the Soviet campaign to alter the status of West Berlin, and held up as evidence of the constructive nature of Soviet efforts ever since. Yet the Soviet draft provides that, in the absence of a German confederation, the treaty of peace shall be concluded with the separate German states (or *in extremis* with only one of them). It thus emphasises once again the limits of present-day Soviet thinking about German reunification.

No wonder that, as Soviet support for the Ulbricht regime has grown and the horizon of reunification receded, Soviet appeals to West Germany have lost much of their intended charm and Soviet threats their desired sting. Consider, for example, the Soviet reaction to the proposal to equip the West German *Bundeswehr* with tactical nuclear weapons. This was the occasion for a dire Soviet warning that 'the transformation of West Germany into a hotbed of atomic war would deal an irreparable blow to the national reunification of the German people.'[14] Although the theme was communicated to the German audience with considerable energy, it failed to arouse wide concern, if only because the negative consequence which it threatened had been depicted so many times before and, indeed, seemed already to be a reality. More positive Soviet overtures have not been any more successful. To recall the foreign policy

[13] On Ulbricht's confederation formula, see *Neues Deutschland*, 31 December 1956.
[14] Soviet Note to the Federal Republic of Germany, 27 April 1957; full text in *Pravda*, 28 April 1957.

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traditions of Bismarck, to invoke the 'spirit of Rapallo', and to depict trade opportunities in the East in one breath, while urging West Germans to discard 'political illusions' and to accept the DDR in the next, has so far proved self-defeating.

This fundamental West German imperviousness to Soviet appeals, some disturbing indications to the contrary notwithstanding, has, in turn, also conditioned Bonn's policy towards the Soviet Union and East Europe. The Eastern policy of the Federal Republic, in the Adenauer era, cannot be understood apart from the over-riding importance which the Chancellor has attached to the Western alliance and the absolute value which he assigns to West Germany's abiding loyalty to the alliance. Accordingly, Bonn's policy towards Moscow has been tough to the point of appearing at times almost intractable. Yet to the extent to which Adenauer's steadfastness in political conception has been matched by a shrewdness in German negotiating technique, the Chancellor's approach has in fact even achieved a limited number of minor successes.

The most obvious case in point concerns the repatriation of Germans held in the Soviet Union. Hard bargaining in Moscow in 1955 enabled the Chancellor to obtain the release of almost 10,000 prisoners of war, held by the Soviet authorities as war criminals, as his price for agreeing to a normalisation of diplomatic relations.[15] Even more astounding was the success of West German diplomacy in arranging for the return of German civilians who, despite their long sojourn in the USSR, were held to be eager to leave. The release of civilian persons, always a matter of some delicacy for the Soviet regime, was made especially difficult on account of the unjustifiably large number (80,000) initially claimed by the West German Foreign Ministry. After nine months of onerous and often acrimonious negotiations, the West Germans did manage to secure Soviet agreement to a formula which actually allowed the departure of most of the group in question. In return, the Federal Republic acceded to a trade and payments agreement and a consular convention, both of which were formally signed by Mikoyan in Bonn in April 1958. By linking the issue of repatriation to the known Soviet interest in defining and expanding trade relations, and by handling the entire matter with considerable diplomatic astuteness and finesse, the Adenauer government proved able to extract improbable Soviet concessions.

Opportunities for this kind of diplomatic success are, by their very nature, rather limited. Once such success has been achieved, similar opportunities are not likely to recur. What is more, except for repatriation and trade agreements with some of the other communist states of Europe, as well as with the USSR, there remains little else of substance

[15] For a more complete account of these negotiations, see Wilhelm Backhaus, *Begegnung im Kreml: So wurden die Gefangenen befreit* (Berlin, 1955). Although the Soviet announcement of an amnesty to the prisoners was couched in language which implied that the Soviet government had acceded to a request for their release made in the first instance by the East German authorities, other Soviet statements and the behaviour of the released prisoners themselves publicised the repatriation as the exclusive doing of Adenauer's diplomacy.

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to attribute to Adenauer's *Ostpolitik*. Rather than skilful diplomatic initiative, Bonn's policy has been marked by hesitation and maladroitness.

The reason for this sorry state of West German diplomacy may be summarised in a single word—Pankow. Not that the East German regime has actively countered Bonn's search for diplomatic ties and political influence in East-Central Europe; indeed, it has not had to do so. The mere existence of the DDR, which Bonn refuses to concede to be anything more than a grotesque legal fiction, has effectively blocked the road to the East.

V

THE INSURMOUNTABLE barriers to an active *Ostpolitik* imposed by Bonn's unconditional rejection of Pankow have nowhere been more apparent than in relations with Poland. Gomulka's return to power in October 1956 produced a widespread and quite genuine interest in a normalisation of West German-Polish relations. Both governments, it was freely argued, shared a common antipathy to the staunchly Stalinist Ulbricht regime. The rapid and almost total deterioration of relations between Warsaw and Pankow in late 1956 seemed to present a unique opportunity for a rapprochement between Bonn and Warsaw. The logic behind such an outcome seemed almost self-evident: by rendering assistance to a national communist regime, West Germany might contribute to the breakup of the Stalinist international monolith and thereby also gain for itself an ally to the East against Ulbricht. Poland might welcome political and material support from West Germany, the better to shore up the internal foundations of its autonomy. With the Federal Republic as an ally to the West against Ulbricht, Gomulka could probably rid himself of the fearsome spectre that Soviet policy might use the DDR as a lever against his regime. In their most expansive form, such thoughts even conjured up the possibility that cooperation between Bonn and Warsaw might in the end help to eliminate Pankow entirely.

These exciting prospects continued to inspire generous thoughts of noble actions towards Poland even after Gomulka's visit to East Berlin in June 1957 produced a substantial improvement in his relations with Ulbricht. But how to translate diffuse inspiration into concrete policies? While Bonn tarried in the attempt, Marshal Tito accorded Yugoslav recognition to the DDR. In a single instant, in October 1957, the problem of how to establish ties with Poland became inseparably linked to the question of whether to maintain relations with Yugoslavia. So long as Bonn's entire Eastern policy was predicated upon the principle that the East German regime was not a reality but only a legal fiction, states enjoying formal diplomatic relations, however bad, with the DDR could not expect any favours from Bonn.

That much and more was already incorporated in a fundamental postulate of West Germany's foreign policy, the 'Hallstein Doctrine', which committed the Federal Republic to terminate relations with any

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state recognising the DDR. Before Yugoslavia's action, to be sure, there had been some talk in official circles about 'liberalising' the Hallstein doctrine to allow for exceptions (in addition to the rather special case of the Soviet Union) by establishing a separate formula for states which had recognised the DDR *before* entering upon relations with West Germany (thus Poland and other members of the Soviet bloc). The decision to keep the Hallstein doctrine intact, as originally formulated, and to make it completely operative against Yugoslavia, was urged upon the Chancellor by Foreign Minister Brentano. To do otherwise, Brentano argued, would surely lead to a wholesale recognition of the DDR on the part of the neutralist nations. That, in turn, would constitute a grievous blow against Bonn's argument that East Germany was not a real German state at all. This over-riding first principle of Bonn's *Ostpolitik* thus led in 1957 not only to the severance of relations with Yugoslavia but also to the collapse of the projected rapprochement with Poland and to a rather humiliating public confession of the serious limitations on developing initiatives in East-Central Europe which Bonn had imposed upon itself.

The application of the Hallstein doctrine in the Yugoslav case marked a major defeat for those of its critics within the Bonn Foreign Office who regarded it as outmoded in conception and objectionable in operation. What Brentano and the other proponents of the Hallstein doctrine chose to overlook was the enormously embarrassing situation which might develop should the Federal Republic ever be forced to sever relations with any one of the neutralist states. Just such a situation seemed to present itself in March 1960, when the Guinean Ambassador to the USSR made a public display of his credentials as Ambassador to the DDR over East Berlin television. Had Bonn broken off the relations which it had so carefully cultivated with Guinea, it would without doubt have incurred the enmity of many other newly independent African states and also gratuitously contributed to the further decline of the already low prestige of the West in Guinea itself. As things turned out, the worst was avoided thanks to Sekou Touré's timely denial that he had in fact recognised the DDR. The seriousness of the Guinean affair was scarcely alleviated by its one amusing, not to say ludicrous, aspect—the spectacle of the chief of the Western Department of the Bonn Foreign Office, Hasso von Etzdorf, on a fourteen-hour safari through jungle and bush to seek out an elusive Touré in order to extract from him the necessary clarification.[16] The case of Guinea proved, if proof were needed, that the detrimental consequences for Bonn's foreign policy of its rigidly consistent rejection of the very existence of the DDR were not necessarily restricted to East-Central Europe alone. To make matters even worse, Bonn's exclusive reliance upon formal diplomatic devices was not really succeeding in isolating the East German regime, except in the most parochial diplomatic sense. Although deprived of

[16] See the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 11 April 1960.

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formal recognition, Pankow's presence has been manifest in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and even some countries of Western Europe, thanks to the vigour with which the East German regime has pursued the development of trade and commercial ties in all these directions.

Although West German policy in the underdeveloped world has moved beyond the Hallstein doctrine and developed imaginative political and economic programmes effectively to counter Pankow's influence, no such positive developments have yet proved possible in Bonn's policy towards East-Central Europe. Here the Hallstein doctrine continues to be decisive in at least two basic ways. Initially, the fact that the countries of the communist bloc enjoy diplomatic relations with the DDR still presents an absolute bar to Bonn's entering upon formal relations with any one of them. Once again, the case of Yugoslavia illustrates the point. Discussions between Bonn and Belgrade to explore the possibility of restoring normal relations have invariably collapsed precisely because West Germany continues to demand that Yugoslavia break off entirely, or at least 'freeze', its relations with the DDR. Secondly, the Hallstein doctrine helps, in a real even if intangible way, to perpetuate and strengthen West German attitudes which tend to be oblivious of subtle distinctions among the communist regimes of East-Central Europe and callous towards their legitimate national interests. This is especially true where the final determination of Germany's eastern boundaries is concerned. It is one thing to insist that, since the DDR is only a legal fiction, none of its international obligations, including its acceptance of the Oder-Neisse line, can be considered valid or in any way binding upon a united German state. In fact, for psychological and political reasons—no less than for legalistic ones—the very acceptance of the Oder-Neisse boundary by the DDR makes Bonn's rejection of it that much the more strenuous. And, paradoxically, as the diplomatic prospects for reunification have dimmed, the domestic pressures for a revision of the present eastern boundaries have mounted. While the Federal Republic has pledged itself through international instruments never to use force to recover the 'lost eastern territories', the Adenauer regime has clung to the position that the final decision on Germany's eastern borders must be reserved for an all-German peace settlement, and its spokesmen have declared themselves, with various degrees of vigour, prepared to press for arrangements other than those which presently obtain.

All these currents have been reflected, once again, in West Germany's relations with Poland. With Bonn's initial gestures to Warsaw obstructed by the formidable barrier of the Hallstein doctrine, the subsequent story of West German-Polish relations amounts to a compound of mutual mistrust, misconceptions, and mistakes. The year 1959 was an especially bad one in this respect. Despite earlier frustrations, the Eastern Department of the Bonn Foreign Office concluded that the time was ripe to explore the possibility of new initiatives towards Poland. In this way the Federal Republic might contribute, however modestly, to the general improvement of East-West relations (this was the year of Nixon's Soviet

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and Khrushchev's American visit), and incidentally also deflect Soviet charges that the Adenauer regime was obstructing a relaxation of international tensions and indeed still harbouring aggressive designs of its own in the East.

Unfortunately, the immediate circumstances were far from propitious for a resumption of West German initiative, however well intentioned. The fact that Khrushchev had only recently opened his campaign against West Berlin necessarily heightened tensions between the entire communist bloc and the Federal Republic. Then, too, Bonn's early and hasty rejection of the Rapacki Plan as merely 'Soviet propaganda' had been rather poorly received in Warsaw. Finally, Gomulka's apparently complete reconciliation with Ulbricht, reflected in the Polish leader's unqualified endorsement of the Soviet position on Berlin and by his demonstratively successful meeting with Ulbricht and Grotewohl in December 1958, darkened still further the prospects for a West German policy initiative.

The measures actually contemplated by Bonn in 1959 were modest indeed; nonetheless their failure was complete. A projected offer of non-aggression pacts to Poland and Czechoslovakia, designed to underscore Bonn's commitment never to use force to revise Germany's eastern boundaries, simply backfired. After the government's intention to offer such pacts became public, the project was effectively vetoed by the very same expellee politicians and advocates of an adamant line on the Oder-Neisse question within the Chancellor's party, the CDU, whom Polish propaganda had been charging with the preparation of aggressive plans against Eastern Europe all along. Next, Adenauer's personal gesture of a radio broadcast to the Polish people on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of Hitler's invasion of Poland totally miscarried. His brief remarks, broadcast from his vacation retreat in Italy, contained no specific offers. They did, however, touch an exposed Polish communist nerve by explicitly attributing Poland's wartime sufferings to Hitler Germany *and* the Soviet Union. The Polish reaction to what was officially interpreted as 'a cynical attempt to drive a wedge between the Polish people and the Soviet people' [17] was bitter to the point of fury. To make matters worse, the Germans were also badly mishandling an additional opportunity to make contact with the Poles. In mid-summer 1959, the Bundestag accepted an invitation to participate in a conference of the International Parliamentary Union, scheduled to be held in Warsaw in the autumn. When the West German delegation was announced its CDU component was found to include the very hard-line politicians who had been instrumental in blocking the non-aggression pact offer, as well as two expellee leaders known for their vociferous opposition to the Oder-Neisse frontier. In answer to the ensuing Polish hue and cry, the CDU restricted its participation to a single representative.

[17] See the speech of Cyrankiewicz at ceremonies honouring the Polish dead of World War II, *Trybuna Ludu*, 2 September 1959.

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The non-aggression pact incident, the hostile reaction to Adenauer's speech, and the International Parliamentary Union affair all pointed to a single conclusion: Given the first principles of Bonn's Eastern policy, minor initiatives, even if more thoughtfully conceived and more carefully executed than was the case in 1959, are probably doomed to failure. The point was brought home again in the course of recent visits to Poland by Bertold Beitz, general manager of the Krupp works. The warm official reception accorded to Beitz in 1960 was doubtless due less to the unshakable humanity and personal courage of the man himself during the Nazi occupation of Poland than it was to official Polish interest in a possible change in Bonn's previous policy. In this sense, Beitz's follow-up visit in 1961 was undermined at the outset by the explicit denial, given to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Bundestag by a Foreign Office spokesman, Professor Karl Carstens, that the Federal Republic was contemplating the establishment of diplomatic relations with Poland. Lamenting the confusion which has characterised Bonn's *Ostpolitik*, Beitz himself has publicly refused future service as unofficial ambassador to Poland.[18] His protest thus parallels the action of Minister Albrecht von Kessel, a ranking member of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, who resigned in 1959 in order to dramatise his own objections to Bonn's sterile *Ostpolitik*.[19]

VI

IT WOULD BE a mistake to attribute the present impasse in Bonn's *Ostpolitik* exclusively to the machinations of certain extremist spokesmen for the German expellee groups. There may well be a critical point beyond which no West German politician, not even Chancellor Adenauer in the most energetic days of his active political career, has dared to go in advocating concessions, for fear of arousing slumbering nationalist passions. However that may be, it still misses the major point, for Bonn's Eastern policy has suffered less from the vagaries of its domestic politics than from the rigidities of its international position.

If West Germany's refusal officially to recognise the DDR as anything more than a legal fiction has rendered illusory Bonn's search for positive initiatives towards East Europe and the Soviet Union, then the rigidity of Bonn's position must also be recognised as the inexorable corollary of a larger official illusion. Postulating national reunification as a necessary and feasible goal of its foreign policy, Bonn has held that resoluteness and firmness within an increasingly powerful Western alliance would produce the desired Soviet concessions—up to and including the retirement of Soviet power from Central Europe—and thus accomplish the reunificaiton of Germany 'in freedom'. Even though the Chancellor, who formulated this argument, may never have fully subscribed to it himself,

18 'Gescheiterte Mission in Polen', *Die Zeit*, 6 April 1962.

19 Both Kessel and his erstwhile Department chief, Ferdinand Duckwitz, have come under recurrent attack by the more extreme spokesmen for the League of Expellees (BdV) as 'politicians of renunciation'.

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the line of reasoning has nonetheless enjoyed the indulgence of West German public opinion. So long as this has been the case, Moscow's attempt to dislodge West Germany from the Western alliance by mounting appeals over Adenauer's head, without however being prepared to offer any substantial Soviet concessions on reunification, has also amounted to an illusion.

To suggest, therefore, that, however reprehensible the Ulbricht regime and utterly unworthy its claim to legitimate political authority, the time has come for West Germany to face up to the reality of its separate existence, may be to invite a train of enormously undesirable consequences for the West. Any recognition of the DDR, however nominal, by the Federal Republic involves much more than simply juristic complications relating to national sovereignty of the sort which suggest themselves so readily to the legalistic bent of the German mind. If, for example, a negotiated settlement of the current Berlin crisis should bring home with the full force of shocked innocence and injured pride the totality of the West German illusion, what have been illusory Soviet approaches to the Federal Republic might well develop into the basis for effective Soviet policy appeals.

Recent Soviet diplomacy has demonstrated an astute appreciation of these emerging opportunities. The lengthy memorandum presented to Ambassador Hans Kroll in December 1961 is one recent example. The Soviet memorandum purported to assist the Federal Republic to redefine its own best interests by presenting an extremely critical analysis of the German policy of each of Bonn's NATO allies. Were Bonn to get rid of its illusions concerning the DDR, the memorandum suggested, then there would open up genuine possibilities for intimate relations between Bonn and Moscow. Yet another straw in the wind is Ulbricht's recent request for large-scale, long-term credits from West Germany. When the request was made public in May 1962 it was widely interpreted as a sure sign that the East German economy must be on the verge of collapse. Whatever the economic difficulties inside East Germany, the political inspiration behind this unprecedented gesture could only have come from Moscow. Seen in this light it appears less as an appeal for assistance than as an offer of trade.

To the extent to which both of these overtures anticipate the kind of fundamental change in West German policy which is improbable as long as Adenauer remains at the helm, each was clearly premature. How far and in what direction changes in foreign policy may run once Adenauer passes from the scene is another matter again. This will be the crucial test of the tenacity of the bonds to the West which Adenauer has so painstakingly fashioned, no less than of the resilience of the *Kanzlerdemokratie* which is Adenauer's legacy to his successors at home.

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ADENAUER'S EASTERN POLICY

F. R. Allemann

FEW aspects of West German policy have been left as hazy and indistinct as its relationship to Eastern Europe. Ask any West German what this policy is, and you stand a three to one chance that the man you ask, if he is at all politically sophisticated, will look at you in frank astonishment and tell you that, as far as he knows, there ain't no such thing. Strange as this may sound, he will not be far off the mark. Ever since 1945, the countries of the Eastern bloc, with the exception of Russia and East Germany, have been nearly as far out of the reach of any West German political endeavour as if they were situated somewhere in the heart of Central Asia. They have remained that *terra incognita*, that blank space on Bonn's diplomatic map of the world, which they were when Georg Pfleiderer, the former Free Democrat member of the Bundestag and later ill-starred Ambassador to Belgrade, was desperately looking around, nearly a decade ago, for ways and means to fill that deplorable vacuum; this idealistic as well as markedly independent politician and diplomat lived just long enough to see the failure of his own mission to Yugoslavia and the breaking off of diplomatic relations between Bonn and Belgrade which he had so valiantly striven to prevent.

As everybody knows, this break was the consequence Bonn drew from Tito's decision in 1957 to recognise Russia's German puppet state and to enter into formal diplomatic relations with Ulbricht's GDR. By taking this step, he came up against one of the basic principles of Western Germany's post-war policy, embodied in the Hallstein doctrine, which has, up to now, prevented the Federal Republic from entering upon official diplomatic intercourse with the non-Soviet countries of the Soviet bloc. As formulated by Professor Walter Hallstein (now head of EEC, at that time Secretary of State to Federal Chancellor Adenauer), this doctrine is no more than the strictly logical conclusion from Bonn's fundamental political thesis—its *raison d'état*, so to speak—that the Federal Republic of Germany, as the one and only German state based on popular will and consent, represents the only *legitimate* embodiment of German sovereignty and, therefore, the sole successor and heir to the German Reich, having duly arisen out of the collapse of that political structure.

If this claim is to be taken seriously—and it is not only the Germans who do so—the principle, after all, was recognised by the Western Powers and embodied in the 1955 Paris treaties—then it does indeed follow that Bonn cannot accept or tolerate formal diplomatic links with powers that have established such links with the GDR. To recognise the existence of two German states and to enter into diplomatic relations with Pankow is taken to mean, in this context, the recognition of the partition of Germany. Whoever extends such recognition denies and

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contests the very basis of the Federal Republic's existence. Whoever takes the partition of Germany for granted cannot be a diplomatic partner of the Federal Government. Whoever acts in such a way as to put the Federal Republic on the same juridical footing as the Soviet puppet regime installed and maintained, against the will of the East German population, by sheer Soviet force, makes himself guilty of an 'unfriendly act' not only against Bonn but against the whole German people, represented by Bonn. He has by this act forfeited any right to regular diplomatic intercourse with the legitimate German government. This, in essence, is the argument on which the Hallstein doctrine rests.

THIS is what the Eastern European states inside the Soviet orbit, following Moscow's policy, have from the very beginning done. They have recognised the GDR as a sovereign state; they have exchanged diplomatic representatives with East Berlin; they have even concluded an alliance—the Warsaw Pact—with authorities regarded by Bonn as usurpers. In doing so, they have excluded themselves from normal relations with Bonn and made it impossible for the Federal Government to treat them on the same basis as it does the immense majority of states which have, formally at least, bowed to the West German claim by restricting their contacts with East Germany to a 'non-political' or, at the utmost, a 'quasi-diplomatic' type of relationship. Bonn's position has been, up to now, that it had no choice but to forgo (regretfully, as its spokesmen hasten to point out) any diplomatic ties with them. To act otherwise would, in the eyes of its leaders, be tantamount to abandoning its claim to German unity and/or self-determination; it would, in a roundabout way, recognise the partition of Germany as valid and the demarcation line between the two Germanies as a legal frontier between two juridically equal political communities.

It cannot be denied that this argument is consistent and logical. From a legal (or legalistic) point of view, the Bonn government can scarcely take another attitude. Nor should we forget, either, that the Hallstein doctrine has, up to now, been remarkably successful in preventing the spread of formal recognition of the GDR: not a single country, apart from the Soviet bloc and Tito's Yugoslavia, has challenged the validity of this principle or incurred Bonn's displeasure by ignoring or openly over-riding it (though it must be said that some neutral governments in Asia and Africa have, in their dealings with East Berlin, inched as far towards recognition as they could do without provoking the Federal Republic to a rupture of diplomatic relations; in many instances, the difference formally maintained between the attitudes to East and West German representatives in these countries is a matter of shadow rather than substance). Nevertheless, the political flaws in the juridical argument have been obvious for a long time. There is something irritatingly unreal in a set of principles—immaculate as they may be in theory—that cuts you off from diplomatic interchange with some of your nearest neighbours. Many people in West Germany have often asked themselves

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whether the Hallstein doctrine's main effect was not to shackle Bonn's rather than East Berlin's initiative, and whether the formal isolation of the Ulbricht regime achieved by this means was really worth the price. By trying to shut Ulbricht in, Bonn has laid itself open to many attempts at blackmail: the threat to recognise the GDR if Bonn does this or does not do that has already become a time-honoured device for wringing concessions out of a recalcitrant Federal Government.

The doctrine, moreover, has long been drained of some of its original inflexibility. The softening-up started when Dr Adenauer, during his visit to Moscow in 1955, over-ruled the objections of some of his diplomatic advisers and agreed to restore normal diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Thus in the Soviet capital, at least, two German ambassadors have now been rubbing shoulders, metaphorically at least, for nearly seven years, and this has certainly effected a breach in the Hallstein principle. But if the Russians are excepted from the general rule, why on earth should the Poles or the Czechs still be subject to it?

This question has often been asked in the course of the last few years, and the official or semi-official answers to it have not always remained quite the same. The main argument in 1955 was that, after all, the Hallstein doctrine was subordinate to the interests of German unity, and that this unity might be furthered more effectively if Bonn disposed of a 'direct line to Moscow' and if it was able to carry on a continuous dialogue with the power that, by its domination of Eastern Germany, held the key to German re-unification. At the time this sounded so convincing that opposition to this step soon died down. Russia, most people agreed, as an occupying power in Germany, was a case apart. You could not really forgo contact with the very nation on whose decisions the fulfilment of your major political aims depended; compromise was justified in this case, and could not be construed as a precedent for Russia's satellites, which were wholly dependent on the Soviet Union, and could not in any case be won over to German 're-unification in freedom' unless Moscow was willing to allow this; if the Kremlin were to agree, there was no danger of the Poles and the Czechs rebelling against the decision. Thus no purpose would be served by establishing direct diplomatic ties with Warsaw or Prague—let alone Budapest or Sofia; there simply was no point in further modifying the Hallstein doctrine or in exerting any diplomatic effort on 'normalising' relations with them.

THIS, in a nutshell, was the Bonn attitude in 1955. One year later, however, the crisis in Russia's European empire which followed the 20th CPSU congress seemed to open up new vistas. For a time it looked as if the satellites might no longer remain satellites. Warsaw, in particular, showed a tendency to strike out in an independent line, not only in home affairs but, for a time, even in foreign policy. The 'Polish October' aroused tremendous interest in Germany; in intellectual circles, at least, it started a strong wave of sympathy that has not yet abated. It became fashionable to think of the Poles not only as a people striving

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for more liberty (even if within a communist framework), but also as neighbours of Germany who might share some common interests with the Germans and whose neutrality in the German fight for unity it might not prove impossible to obtain. All the Federal Republic needed was to find some way to convince them of its peaceful aims.

Since 1945, the Germans—including the leaders of the many 'expellee' organisations in Western Germany—had always declared that while they did not recognise the Oder-Neisse frontier and would press for its revision in a future peace treaty, they would never use force to regain their lost Eastern provinces. Now a new idea began to gain ground which, previously, had only been timidly and intermittently advanced by some outsiders: the idea that it might be worthwhile to go one step further. Would not one of the serious obstacles to re-unification be removed if the Poles could count on formal German recognition of the Oder-Neisse line? Might it not even be useful to consider taking that step at once, if that would induce the Polish people to view German aspirations with sympathy rather than with the fear of a new *Drang nach Osten*? And, in such a context, would it not be a condition of any German initiative, of any active *Ostpolitik*, to throw the Hallstein doctrine overboard and establish direct communications between Warsaw and Bonn?

The wider implications of this new concept, it is true, were not discussed openly except by a relatively small group of journalists and political writers (mainly, though not exclusively, belonging to the left wing of public opinion). The Adenauer government never accepted this thesis. On the other hand, it is known that the idea had its partisans in the administration. On one occasion even Brentano, then Foreign Minister, went out of his way tentatively to suggest that Germany might have to renounce its claims to the territories beyond the Oder-Neisse as part of the price of re-unification, though he quickly retired behind some vague 'interpretations' of this remark when he was angrily denounced by the spokesmen of the expellee groups. But if Bonn, for domestic and electoral reasons, was reluctant to bring up the frontier question, it certainly did not feel disinclined to take some minor steps: all through the late fifties, the search for some *rapprochement* between Bonn and Warsaw went on, by unofficial contacts and soundings as well as by certain public—though not always particularly happily worded—declarations intended to evoke some friendly response from the Gomulka government.

All these attempts came to naught. In 1956 and 1957 Bonn still did not feel able to abandon formally the Hallstein doctrine, or to extend the exception accorded to the Soviet Union to others; instead, it approached the Polish government with the proposal that some intermediate stage between formal diplomatic relations and no relations at all might be reached by establishing reciprocal Trade Missions in Warsaw and Bonn which could serve as pseudo-diplomatic or crypto-diplomatic representations until such time as further steps could be taken. This the

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Poles rejected. On the other hand, they were at that time perfectly willing to re-establish diplomatic relations without demanding formal recognition of the Oder-Neisse frontier as a *conditio sine qua non* of such relations. But when, somewhat later, the Germans had finally come round and were no longer adverse to considering full diplomatic relations, the Polish attitude had hardened; now, Warsaw insisted that Germany would first have to drop its claims to 'Polish territory' and to renounce any title to the areas beyond the Oder-Neisse before diplomatic representatives could be exchanged. Recently, the Poles have once more raised their demands. In the course of some unofficial Polish-German exchanges, they are said to have made the resumption of formal diplomatic contacts dependent on the recognition not only of the Oder-Neisse line but of the sovereignty of Eastern Germany as well. Thus even if the Federal Government were now ready to accept normal relations with Poland, it would come up against the newly reinforced solidarity of the 'socialist camp': by its earlier hesitations and tergiversations, it gave the Soviets (and Ulbricht) the time effectively to close the door which, six or even five years ago, seemed so promisingly open for a new and more active German *Ostpolitik*.

OF all the belated and half-hearted efforts made by Bonn to formulate such a policy, one attempt to redefine the Hallstein doctrine may be of more than passing interest. When Yugoslavia decided to recognise the GDR, and when Bonn reacted to this move by severing diplomatic ties with Belgrade, Herr von Brentano, in the course of a press conference, gave a new, remarkable, and much more flexible reading of the doctrine: it did not necessarily prevent Germany from entering into closer contacts with the members of the Eastern bloc who, under Russian influence, had established formal relations with Eastern Germany the moment the GDR was formed. Any state, however, that had once acknowledged the Federal Republic as the one legitimate German state, was barred by the doctrine from extending similar recognition to the usurpers in East Berlin; only in such circumstances was recognition to be considered an 'unfriendly act'. By establishing this distinction, Brentano was obviously trying to free his hands from the Hallstein shackles while utilising to the full the deterring effect of the doctrine in relation to the Western and the neutral world. Unfortunately, this declaration has never been followed up, and in the present state of affairs as exemplified by Polish reluctance and conditioned by the Berlin conflict, Brentano's fine distinction is wholly theoretical. It indicates, neverthless, that even official Germany has looked round for some way of opening a gap in the fence raised by its own *raison d'état*, and that some government circles in Bonn, reaching quite high in the administration, have felt the need to avoid too legalistic an approach. The 'new pragmatism' which Dr Gerhard Schroeder has begun to introduce into the German Foreign Office since taking over from Brentano in the autumn of 1961,

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is bound to develop on much the same lines. (It seems to have been Schroeder who initiated the last confidential soundings in Warsaw that yielded such negative results.)

The failure to establish diplomatic relations with the Eastern European countries should not, however, be given undue importance. In the context of present world politics, the exchange of Ambassadors would scarcely change anything in the relations between Western Germany and its Eastern neighbours or near-neighbours. It may well be argued that a significant change could be brought about only by a decisive shift in the balance of power in Europe. How little the existence of diplomatic ties is able, by itself, to open up new perspectives is clearly demonstrated by the history of German-Soviet relations since 1955. Of all the hopes generated by the decision of that year to set up a 'direct line to Moscow', none has materialised. On the contrary: the expectation that the Soviet Union might be won over to some agreed solution of the 'German problem' on the principle of self-determination has receded farther and farther into a vaguer and vaguer future. The Soviet-German dialogue has gone on, if intermittently, but it has not produced even a relaxation of tensions, let alone any more concrete and substantial result. Notwithstanding the excellent (and really quite exceptional) personal relations between Bonn's present Moscow Ambassador Kroll and Mr Khrushchev, political relations between the two powers have rather gone from bad to worse. And they were bound to do so, for Moscow cannot but try, by all means at its disposal, to strengthen the Ulbricht dictatorship in East Germany; this, in essence, is the stark reality behind its moves both to legalise German partition by a peace treaty and to eliminate Western influence from Berlin. Any such move, however, *must* take on the shape of a direct attack on the status and the *raison d'état* of the Federal Republic. And, conversely, any initiative from Bonn to put German self-determination (if not re-unification) back on the agenda of international diplomacy, *must* be considered by the Kremlin as a potential danger to the integrity of the 'socialist camp' and as a symptom of 'revanchism'.

So long as Russia intends not only to legalise the existence of two German states but to keep the present social and political system in East Germany intact, and so long as Western Germany is unwilling to accept this state of affairs, there is simply no way to reconcile the interests of Moscow and Bonn. And this being so, any hope of removing or circumventing this stumbling-block by more or less friendly talks, by expanding trade, or by entertaining a modicum of cultural contacts, is nothing but sheer illusion. Nothing has demonstrated this more clearly than the failure of the strong-willed personality and the highly personal diplomacy of Ambassador Kroll: for all his frantic activity he has got nowhere except to the point where his over-eagerness hastened his own downfall. Would any other German diplomat stationed in Prague or Warsaw have been more successful?

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TO acknowledge this does not at all mean to defend the curious immobilism and inertia that has characterised Germany's Eastern European policy. For while even a much better (that is, more flexible and more bold) policy might not have broken the deadlock, it might, at least, have laid the foundations on which, at a more propitious time, a constructive programme could be set in motion. It is certain that Germany cannot, by any initiative of her own, change the relation of forces on the European continent. But by simply doing nothing, by sitting back and waiting for something to turn up, she exposes herself to the danger of missing the next opportunity if and when it presents itself. There is no better time than one of deadlock for a nation to ponder long-term prospects; yet there are few signs that Germany is actually devoting some of her frustrated energies to the elaboration of a long-term diplomatic strategy in this field. Perhaps Dr Schroeder's idea of setting up a planning staff in the Foreign Office is a move in the right direction; precisely because the present Foreign Minister feels deeply convinced that the Federal Republic has really very little freedom of tactical manoeuvre left (which is the basis of his pragmatic approach to the tasks of his office), he may encourage his subordinates to think ahead a bit more freely and imaginatively than they have been allowed to do in the past. Still, it must be admitted that imagination is not among the strongest qualities of this able politician; his rather conservative mental make-up will not strongly predispose him to turn his mind (and the minds of his staff) to plan in other than purely defensive terms geared to the maintenance of the *status quo*.

In public opinion, on the other hand, the trend of thought started in 1956 is still running strong. The inclination towards accepting the present frontiers *of* Germany (if not those *in* Germany) as a basis for any future settlement seems even more marked today than in the late fifties. To most people of the young generation, Breslau and Königsberg, Danzig and Stettin, appear to be far-away cities irretrievably lost. Of course, the pressure of the *Landsmannschaften* or the *Bund vertriebener Deutscher* (Union of Expelled Germans) to keep up the claim for their restoration to Germany—irrespective of whether this is considered feasible or not—still intimidates the government as well as all parties. But its effect on the population at large is no longer what it was.

It is most interesting (and encouraging) to study the impact made by a document like the memorandum drawn up by eight prominent lay members of the Evangelical Church, which accused the government of 'not telling the truth' to the people about the chances (or lack of them) of ever recovering the lost provinces. In spite of the furious attacks on its authors by the refugee groups and their official spokesmen it has made an astonishingly deep impression on an important section of public opinion. Anybody who remembers the nationalist rantings of even moderate Germans at the time of the Weimar Republic, must be truly amazed by the tremendous amount of goodwill, at least towards Poland, that is manifested in Germany today; it is only a small straw in the wind

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that even a non-communist but pro-Soviet Pole like the Catholic writer and member of Parliament, Kisielewski, has been struck by the fact that more works of recent Polish literature have been translated into German than into any other language.

To more and more Germans, indeed, territorial revisionism of any kind (as distinct from self-determination for the Germans in the Soviet zone) appears increasingly futile, and the notion of opposing the Eastern peace treaty campaign by a set of counter-proposals embodying, among other things, the acceptance of the Oder-Neisse line, seems to be gaining ground rapidly—even though not a single political group has openly espoused this idea.

To a certain extent, this reflects the unexpected but apparently sincere feeling that frontiers no longer matter very much—a feeling engendered by the tendency towards a united Western Europe. The success of the Common Market, in particular, has in some strange way taken the sting out of eastward-bound 'revanchism' as well. At the same time you find, above all among young people, a growing realisation of the need to make amends to the Poles for the treatment they suffered from the Nazis. This also works in the same direction. It may take a long time for this attitude to shape majority opinion, a longer time still for this change to produce some effect abroad, and even longer before the new outlook can become politically effective. Nevertheless, no appraisal of Germany's policy towards Eastern Europe can overlook this slow and sometimes painful process of re-orientation from below which is going on under the deceptive cover of official lethargy.

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THE BERLIN CRISIS

Sebastian Haffner

THE stage for the present Berlin crisis was set in 1944, when the Americans, British, and Russians decided to make Berlin a fourth (later, after the French accession, fifth) German occupation area under a tripartite (later quadripartite) occupation regime. It was easily foreseeable even then that the Russians would be uncomfortable partners and that quadripartite city government in Berlin would prove difficult if not impossible. Moreover, Berlin was situated well inside the projected Russian occupation zone; and yet the experienced diplomatists who negotiated the arrangements for the occupation of Germany failed rather conspicuously to make exact provision for Western access to Berlin. Why?

Retracing their reasoning, one is led right into the structure of today's crisis.

First of all, why was Berlin taken out of the German occupation zones and put under a special Four-Power regime despite the obvious awkwardness of such an arrangement? Very simply because it was too important to be left to any one occupation Power by the others.

In a modern national state—and whatever Germany might have been in its former history, it had been a modern national state for the last three generations—the capital city is as important, perhaps more important politically than all the rest of the country taken together. He who has the capital city will have the country in the end. And since neither the Western Powers nor the Russians could contemplate the prospect of the other side 'having' Germany, neither could afford to let it 'have' Berlin. So Berlin had to be taken out of the individual occupation zones and made, for better or worse, a special Four-Power area.

In agreeing on this, the victorious Powers, consciously or not, made it very difficult, indeed virtually impossible, for themselves to settle Germany by division. Every attempted division would now leave an irreducible residue: Berlin. For because of the political importance of Berlin, nobody could let go his share in it. And as long as Berlin, the German capital city, remained an undivided quadripartite area, every division of its hinterland would remain incomplete and any separate German state provisional.

But what if a policy of division was nevertheless attempted?—and one had to be very shortsighted even in 1944 not to foresee that it would in all likelihood be attempted. Then the struggle for Germany would inevitably take the shape of a struggle for Berlin. And here the fact that Berlin lay right in the middle of the Russian zone became interesting.

It favoured, at first sight, the Western Powers. Whatever German state or states they might set up in their zones if it came to division,

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would be at least territorially of a piece, and to that extent viable. Whatever state the Russians set up in theirs would have a hole in the middle—and in that hole the most important city in Germany, and in that city the Western Powers. Clearly the Russians would find it more difficult than the Western Powers to make 'their' Germany a going concern.

But there was another side to this. Berlin's situation in the middle of the Russian zone also meant that Western access to it would always be somewhat precarious, somewhat dependent on Russian goodwill. At worst, this might enable the Russians to force the Allies out of Berlin simply by cutting their communications, thereby making them lose face in the eyes of all Germany. At best it would always put them in a position to use blackmail.

This being plain for all to see even then, why did not the Western Powers insist on cut-and-dried access arrangements, say two extra-territorial corridors connecting Berlin with the British and American occupation zones? Partly perhaps because such insistence might even then have endangered agreement and upset the war-time alliance before the war was safely over. But partly, too, because the absence of clear-cut access arrangements cut both ways, so that the Western Powers no less than the Russians might have had good reasons to leave the matter vague.

They could, not unreasonably, argue that the right of access was anyhow implicit in the right of occupation. Granted this premise, it might be better not to restrict this right of access at once by treaty to a corridor or two, but to maintain it in its vague and undefined generality and plenitude and be content with military ad hoc arrangements, later to be made on a low level and without prejudice, about its application in practice. Then any later Russian withdrawal from such military accommodations would restore the Western right of access in its original fullness, setting the Western Powers free again to move in and out of Berlin by whatever road they chose. An argument which is clearly rather topical now that the Russians threaten to withdraw from the ad hoc agreements which were later made about the air corridors, the autobahn, and the rail and waterways to which the Western Allies have allowed their right of access to be restricted in practice for the last seventeen years.

It will be seen that here all the elements necessary for an understanding of today's situation are already assembled.

LEGALLY, the situation is still exactly as it was then. The agreement about the Four-Power occupation of Berlin has never been replaced by any other and is therefore under international law still the only legal basis existing in Berlin at all. The East German claim to sovereignty in the Eastern sector of Berlin is legally without any basis whatever. If the Russians should definitely, perhaps in a separate peace treaty with East Germany, renounce their own share of Four-Power sovereignty over Berlin—so far they have always avoided an unambiguous, final, and legally binding statement to that effect—it would mean that sovereignty over the Eastern sector of Berlin would revert

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to the other three partners of the Four-Power occupation regime, not to the East German government, which the Russians cannot legally substitute for themselves in the partnership. East Berlin never belonged to the Russian occupation zone and is therefore no part of any German state which derives from the Russian occupation regime in that zone as its successor. The withdrawal of the Russian Commandant was the latest step in the gradual erosion of the quadripartite status of Berlin.

Legally, the situation remains basically as it was shaped in 1944. It is true that the occupation Powers have since, as might have been predicted even at that time that they would, set up separate German states in their respective zones: the Western Powers a large, economically flourishing, and politically fairly authentic state in the three Western zones; the Russians a smaller, economically weak, and politically phoney state in theirs. Later, they even armed these states and integrated them into their respective European defence systems, NATO and the Warsaw Pact. But they have carefully refrained from ever giving their two German states full sovereignty, and they have in their respective treaties with them always reserved their original rights and powers in all questions concerning Berlin and Germany as a whole, or, in the corresponding Russian formula, in all questions governed by international agreements.

They could hardly have done otherwise. For not only the legal agreements made about Berlin in 1944 but also the political reasons and consequences of those agreements have remained stubbornly in force.

The reasons: Berlin has remained, now as then, the only conceivable capital of Germany; indeed its national fame and importance have grown since 1945. All the major political events and decisions in Germany since then have centred on Berlin, from the unforeseen and history-making 'Western option' of the German people, which was prefigured in Berlin long before the Federal Republic was ever thought of, and from the foundation of the Federal Republic, to which the Prime Ministers of the West German states only agreed after Mayor Reuter of Berlin had encouraged them to do so, through the blockade, the June rising of 1953, and the great exodus from East Germany. More than ever it is true today that whichever way Berlin leads, Germany will follow. The reasons for denying Berlin to any one Power or Power group are therefore stronger than ever for those concerned.

The political consequences of the Berlin agreement of 1944 are also still in force. The division of Germany remains stubbornly incomplete because Berlin cannot be fitted into it. Over and over again it has proved impossible to replace the Four-Power status of Berlin by anything else which would be both acceptable to both sides and compatible with a final division of Germany.

One may admit that the Four-Power status of Berlin looks a little strange in the European political landscape of today. One must also grimly admit that the Western Powers have allowed it again and again to be violated, by tolerating first the installation of a separate German

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city administration in the Eastern sector in 1948, then the installation of the East German government in that same sector, which did not belong to its territory, in 1949, then the gradual blurring of Russian and East German responsibilities in East Berlin, then the flouting of the Four-Power rules about demilitarisation in East Berlin, and finally the crowning insult of the virtual annexation and walling-off of East Berlin by the East German authorities last year—the first territorial loss to communism in Europe since 1945; for, say what you will, before August 1961 East Berlin was not behind the Iron Curtain and since that date it is. But none of this has amounted to giving Berlin a new status. The Western Powers, during the fifties, toyed for a while with a policy of imperceptibly turning West Berlin into an outlying part of West Germany while winking at East Berlin's being treated by the Russians as a part of East Germany. That policy has failed. It has failed because the Russians have refused to play the game. They do claim East Berlin for East Germany but stoutly refuse to let West Berlin go to West Germany. We can therefore leave unanswered the question whether the attempted division of Berlin between the two German states was from the Western point of view ever a sound policy. It is not feasible. There is still no escaping from the Four-Power status, short of a showdown or a surrender.

This has been proved once again by the failure of the long-drawn-out 'soundings' between Washington and Moscow in the last ten months. But it hardly needed that proof. The facts of the situation speak clearly enough. Obviously neither side can leave Berlin to the other, because it is too important. The Russians, moreover, feel they cannot afford the sovereign presence of the Western Allies in Berlin at all, not even in a practically divided Berlin, because with this hole in its middle their German state is in their own view, and even more in that of its government, not viable. The Western Allies on their side cannot afford to get out and leave Berlin to the Russians or the East German communists, not only for reasons of honour, but because it would destroy their political credit and probably lose them all Germany. Nor is it possible to hand Berlin to some neutral authority for safe-keeping, because no neutral authority could conceivably stand up to Russian power in and around Berlin for any length of time. This would only be a poorly disguised Western surrender.

THE Western Powers and Russia accordingly find themselves in Berlin facing the exact situation which they faced in 1944; nor can they escape the consequences of having faced it then. They then made it impossible for themselves to settle 'the German question' amicably and finally through division. Consciously or not, inevitably or not, they created, in Berlin, an insuperable road-block against such a policy. They cannot now get over it. Nor can they extricate themselves from Berlin without dire consequences. They must either go back on their policy of dividing Germany, or they must risk a trial of strength in a struggle for Berlin which would in reality be a struggle for Germany.

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It is worth remembering that such a trial of strength was attempted once before, in 1948–49, and that it ended in a draw. The episode of the Berlin blockade and airlift of those years is usually regarded as a victory for the West; but it was really a draw. Legally, politically, and in terms of power, it left the Berlin situation as it was before. It did not resolve it in favour of the West. True, the Russians did not succeed in pushing the Western Powers out of Berlin or in preventing them from founding a German state in the three Western occupation zones. They did, however, succeed in reducing Allied traffic to a permanent jam in the air corridors, and the Berlin diet to dried potatoes for ten months, as well as in installing a separate German administration in their sector of Berlin and getting away with it. One might call the blockade and airlift a Russian defeat because the Russians failed to gain their major strategic objective; one might also call it a Western defeat because it left the Western Powers in Berlin ever after more anxious than the Russians to avoid a repeat performance—to which they remained exposed all the time. Indeed, the blockade started that policy of Western appeasement in Berlin which began with the toleration of the administrative division of Berlin and culminated with the toleration of the wall.

It is fairest to say that the trial of 1948–49 ended in a draw. It did so because neither side wanted or felt it could afford a full-scale war, and short of full-scale war the local power position was very nicely balanced: against the geographical isolation of Berlin, which favoured the Russians, stood the greater economic and political vulnerability of their German state and the sympathies of the Berlin (and East German) population, which favoured the Western Powers.

The situation has not really changed in any of these respects today, and the most likely outcome of another showdown in Berlin would therefore still be another draw. The interest in avoiding full-scale war is on both sides even stronger than it was fourteen years ago, for reasons which are too obvious to need pointing out. The vulnerability of the Berlin communications is what it always was. So is the economic and political vulnerability of the East German state. The sympathies of the Berlin (and East German) population also still continue to lie with the West—rather surprisingly, perhaps, if one considers the Western performance of the past few years.

In one respect the situation of the Western Powers is stronger than it was in 1948: the installation of the East German government and party in East Berlin, a move as imprudent as it is illegal, has put a valuable hostage into Berlin in case of another local showdown; in 1948 there was no such hostage. In another respect, however, the Western situation is weaker today: the Western governments of 1948 understood the German situation and the stakes in Berlin and knew their own mind. Those of the 1960s (except the French one) have given no sign that they do. In the intervening decade they seem to have forgotten rather a lot. The present German policy of the British and American governments appears to be based on the assumption that they can somehow combine

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a tacit agreement with Russia on German division with an alliance with one part of divided Germany against Russia, and that they can somehow maintain their rights in the Western parts of Berlin while allowing the Four-Power status of Berlin, which is the basis of these rights, to go by default. They apparently want to maintain an occupied 'West Berlin' as a functionless anomaly in a divided Germany and by the side of an 'East Berlin' which they are prepared to treat as the capital of a semi-recognised East Germany. This is clearly a confused and incoherent position, and a very poor wicket on which to bat.

The Berlin position was perfectly sound as long as its political meaning—to keep the German question open and to prevent any tentative division of Germany from becoming final and complete—was clearly understood on all sides. It became critical the moment this understanding faltered in the West. This faltering is still the root of the trouble.

THE present Berlin crisis grows out of the fallacious assumption—explicitly and repetitively proposed by Moscow and tacitly and thoughtlessly accepted by Washington and London—that the German division is an accomplished and irreversible fact, that East Berlin is a part of East Germany, and that all that remains to be done is to find some 'solution' for 'West Berlin'. All the quarrel seems to be about is how this should be done: whether West Berlin should become, for practical purposes, a three-Power protectorate loosely linked with West Germany, as the West modestly and unimaginatively proposes, or whether it should become an unprotected, neutralised 'Free City' at the mercy of Russia and East Germany, as the Russians demand.

The difference between these two solutions (neither of which has any legal basis) looks small, but is still all-important. The continued existence of an inviolably Western West Berlin in the middle of East Germany is still enough to make the East German communists and their Russian sponsors despair of the viability of their state; while the withdrawal of Western protection means the certainty of the fall of West Berlin to the communists and, in the further consequence, the high probability of all Germany turning to Russia.

But if this is understood, it becomes clear that the assumption of an accomplished German division, into which Berlin or West Berlin must merely somehow be fitted, is false. The division of Germany is by no means an accomplished fact. The struggle for Germany—the whole of Germany—is still as much on as ever. What is really at stake in Berlin is clearly by no means only 'the freedom of the West Berliners' but the fate of Germany. And if this is so it proves that the two Germanies are by no means firmly planted, sturdy realities which could be uprooted only by world war. They are, so it rather seems, pretty shaky, vulnerable, and experimental contraptions, whose future, indeed in at least one case whose existence, depends entirely on what happens in Berlin.

The truth is that the existence of Berlin makes the division of Germany not only incomplete but unworkable and untenable in the longer run—as

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the statesmen and diplomatists of 1944 realised better than those of 1962. That animal, Germany, happens to have only one head; and what happens to that head determines what happens to the animal. Hence the impossibility of resolving the hard residue of the Berlin question in any policy of German division; and hence also the inevitability of recurrent Berlin crises so long as that policy is pursued. Those who rejoice in the apparent success of the division policy must realise that ever-renewed, intractable crises over Berlin are an inescapable corollary; and those who cheerfully counsel getting rid of those crises by getting rid of Berlin—simply handing it to the communists and having done with it once and for all—must realise that they would thereby utterly destroy the idyll of the present Federal Republic and its Western orientation and would in effect turn all Germany over to the Russians.

In short, Berlin and the 1944 agreements on Berlin make nonsense of the policy of dividing Germany and allying oneself with its parts. Berlin's situation in the middle of East Germany defeats the present Russian policy of consolidating a separate communist state in East Germany and making of it a bulwark against the West. The situation of Berlin's communications in Russian-controlled territory defeats the Western policy of turning the balance of power in Europe by allying itself with a rearmed West Germany—if this policy had not already been undermined in any case by the developments of arms technology. If Russia and the Western Powers are not prepared now or later to go to war over Berlin, they must reconsider their German policies.

All this is not really very new. Both in 1949, when the two German states were officially established, and in 1955, when they were integrated into NATO and the Warsaw Pact respectively, it was clearly understood by all concerned that these were not moves towards a German settlement, but merely fighting bids in the struggle over the terms of a future settlement which was to rest on German unity. In 1949 this understanding was expressed in the final communiqué of the Paris conference of Foreign Ministers, which, despite the impending establishment of the German states, explicitly restored and reaffirmed the Four-Power status of Berlin. In 1955 it was expressed in the final communiqué or 'directive' of the Geneva summit meeting which, despite the just-proclaimed accession of the two Germanies to NATO and the Warsaw Pact, reaffirmed the joint responsibility of the Four Powers for a solution of the German question, and moreover stipulated that this solution was to be achieved by way of 'German reunification through free elections in accordance with the interests of the German people and of European security'. While moving in one direction, the Four Powers both times assured each other that they knew well that the real German solution lay in the opposite direction, and that what they were doing was only to *reculer pour mieux sauter*.

Whether they meant what they said may perhaps be doubted. Nevertheless, what they said was the truth. Given the existence of Berlin, the agreements made in 1944, the political character and the geographical situation of Germany, and the balance of power between East and West,

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the division of Germany and the integration of its two parts into the two military systems in Europe made sense only as a repeated raising of the bids in a game about the ultimate terms of a German settlement, not as moves towards that settlement itself.

Of the two raisings of the bids, the first was well-conceived and benefited the West: West Germany has to this day proved rather a success as a pilot experiment and prototype of the future German state; East Germany has proved the opposite. The second was a Western miscalculation and brought no advantages. It is impossible to see in what way West Germany's rearmament and inclusion in NATO has improved the Western bargaining position over Germany.

The Russians showed themselves very well aware of the true state of the game both times. In 1952, three years after the establishment of the two states, they proposed the restoration of German national unity and a settlement on the basis of German neutrality: a clear if dignified and partial offer of retreat, for it involved the liquidation of their East German communist state. In 1958, three years after the arming and military integration of the two states, they presented their first Berlin ultimatum: a clear, offensive challenge. They felt that the balance of the game had gone against them the first time, had moved in their favour the second.

The Western reaction in both cases was unintelligent and unedifying: haughty and intransigent in the first case, when the Russians behaved reasonably and amenably; soft and over-accommodating in the second, when they were rude and aggressive. The West refused the chance of an interesting and acceptable German settlement when it was on offer. It is now vainly running after an unattainable and highly dangerous 'Berlin solution' or 'new Berlin title', when all that is on offer is a showdown in Berlin.

People nowadays often seem to think that because Berlin is geographically smaller than Germany, the Berlin question can more easily be solved than the German one; a sort of political, pathetic fallacy. The truth is that the 'Berlin question', which arises only if the division of Germany is accepted as unalterable, is quite insoluble against this background—or soluble only by force, with calamitous consequences for the loser. The ideal solution would be for the Four Powers to retrace their steps back to 1945—or even earlier—and start afresh on working out a peace treaty with an undivided Germany. The more likely prospect, however, is one not of settlement or accommodation, but of chronic crisis. Chronic, because even another local showdown in Berlin—unless allowed to escalate into full-scale war—promises no decision. The odds are that it would, like the first one of 1948–49, after a period of unnecessary, tangled, and obscure tensions, sufferings, efforts, incidents, and anxieties, end in a draw and leave things very much where they were before, with all parties 'in a balanced state of moderate dissatisfaction' and with another Berlin crisis coming round a few years hence. Such recurrent crises would surely be preferable to a Western surrender.

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GERMANY'S EASTERN NEIGHBOURS

Elizabeth Wiskemann

IN the early years of the twentieth century Germany's loudest voices, especially those of her major industrialists and the Pan-German Society, spoke in terms of Germany's natural right to dominate Eastern Europe. The Germans took for granted that the best hope for the Slavs lay in germanisation; if they adopted German, which was a *Weltsprache*, they would be speaking the language of technical advance. The newly stimulated nationalisms of the Czechs and the Poles were most sharply challenged by such German claims, but these were an indirect challenge to all the smaller nationalities in Eastern Europe.

The Czechs were the biggest Slav national unit within Austria-Hungary before 1914. Since the seventeenth century they had been a leaderless peasantry dependent upon the huge estates of the German-speaking aristocracy. During the nineteenth century they had rediscovered their language and their history, and after 1860 they had gradually pushed their way into the management and direction of some of the important industries of Bohemia, Moravia, and Austrian Silesia, the 'historic provinces' of the old Bohemian crown. But the population of these provinces was only two-thirds Czech; the other third was Austrian-German and lived mainly in the key frontier regions. With very few exceptions, the Bohemian Germans (in Moravia inter-race relations were strangely easier) were convinced of their own inherent and permanent superiority; they considered it the duty of the Czechs to submit, not only to their rule, but also to their language and their way of life. It was not so much the Bohemian aristocracy which made these racial claims, but mainly the German-speaking middle class, the businessmen who resented gradually intensifying Czech competition. As the Czechs grew richer they were able to gain some influence over local affairs, which were controlled by assemblies elected on the basis of a franchise heavily weighted in favour of wealth. They were also able to finance schools of their own where current interpretation of the Austrian constitution did not make these a public responsibility. German working-men, too, resented the presence of the Czechs who, particularly in the North Bohemian mines, were prepared to work for lower wages.

The Czechs felt a great sense of political as well as social grievance because in 1867 the dynasty had recognised the autonomy not of Bohemia but of Hungary; this divided the Habsburg dominions between the rule of Vienna and Budapest, splitting up the subject Slavs. From 1879 to 1908, however, the Austrian government succeeded in conciliating the Czechs at the price of Bohemian-German protests. Indeed, during this

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period Czech leaders like Kramar nursed hopes of inducing a *rapprochement* between Austria-Hungary and Russia, two states of predominantly Slav population: this *rapprochement* was to act as a curb upon German ambition in Austria and Germany.

IN October 1908 the annexation of Bosnia and Hercegovina by Austria-Hungary was felt as an affront to Russia and the Southern Slavs, and thus also to the Czechs with their Slavonic sympathies. The Bohemian Germans, like the Germans of the *Reich*, applauded the change of policy. After the introduction of manhood suffrage for the *Reichsrat* or central Parliament, the general election in 1907 had plainly revealed the Slav majority in Austria; it was in the very next year, and shortly after a Pan-Slav congress in Prague which discussed the German economic menace, that Austrian policy became anti-Slav. Thus from 1908 to 1914 the Czech-German quarrel was intensified, and the Czechs returned to their resentment against the dynasty. When it came to the Austro-Serb quarrel in the summer of 1914, Czech sympathies were bound to be with the Serbs rather than with their own government. As Mr Zeman has recently emphasised,[1] this does not mean that the Czechs immediately envisaged their own independence. But in a war in which, for Eastern Europe, the fundamental issue was whether the Germans should dominate the Slavs or not, most Czechs were bound to look for some escape from what they felt as their humiliating subjection to the Austrian Germans. Kramar was not alone in advocating an alignment or link with Russia: since 1905 less conservative Czechs had had hope of a more liberal regime with which they would wish to cooperate. Masaryk preferred western connections; this impelled him to formulate the aim of an independent Czechoslovak state which should cause the Slovaks of Hungary to look to Prague rather than the Czechs to St Petersburg. No doubt in his propaganda campaigns abroad he exaggerated the support at home for Czech independence.

The attitude of the young Czech in the Austrian army varied from correct if unenthusiastic behaviour to near mutiny.[2] Many small Czech officials had a vested interest in Austria, and they were cautious people. But with the old Emperor's death in November 1916 sentimental ties with Vienna were snapped and Masaryk's activities became both interesting and attractive.[3] By this time it had become clear that the war aims of Germany, which set the pace for Austria-Hungary, were Pan-German, involving the establishment of a vast, German-dominated *Mitteleuropa*.[4] Already the German Austrians had demanded a return to German as the only official language in Austria and the suppression of the schools where the teaching was provided in any other language; this would wipe out all

1 Z. A. B. Zeman, *The Break-up of the Habsburg Empire* (London, 1961).
2 A portion, at least, of the 28th Prague Infantry Battalion deserted to the Russians on 3 April 1915.
3 When Russia became Bolshevik, only Czechs on the extreme left still wished for a Russian connection.
4 See Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht* (1961).

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that the Austrian Slavs had won since 1848, including the Czech University of Prague. Gradually Masaryk and Benes had gained support in France, Britain, and the United States. At last in June 1918 the Allies recognised the Czechoslovak National Committee in Paris as the basis of a future independent government, and Benes was assured of a place at the Peace Conference.

It was with a sense of almost miraculous achievement that the Czechs welcomed back Masaryk to be the first President of a new sovereign state, their own this time. At the beginning the Slovaks were not unwilling to join them, but even so the structure of Czechoslovakia was somewhat precarious. If her western frontiers were to have strategic meaning, they must be the old frontiers of Bohemia, bringing with them over three million intransigently anti-Slav Germans. In the east it was decided that she should incorporate Ruthenia, a very poor province, formerly Hungarian, where Ukrainian dialects [5] prevailed; Ruthenia was regarded as a necessary corridor to Rumania, so that rump Hungary might be contained by the Czechs and Rumanians. The new Czechoslovakia accepted the Minorities Treaty in 1919 and the obligations it brought of providing minority schools and bilingual administration in minority areas. The Czechs did not oppress the Sudeten Germans (as they now began to be called), but they annoyed them by making plain that it was the Czechs' turn to be the *Staatsvolk*. Between 1918 and 1933 the Germans of the *Reich* took little interest in the Sudeten Germans; the latter were visited by Youth Movement and Nazi party groups, but that was all.

ONCE Hitler came to power, however, the position was transformed. Hitler was an Austrian Pan-German. Like most Sudeten Germans, he regarded Bohemia as part of Austria and both as by right belonging to *Grossdeutschland*. Once he had re-armed Germany, the Czechs were at his mercy unless their French ally was prepared to come to their rescue. Hitler reduced the likelihood of the French doing so by helping the Sudeten Germans to present themselves to the world as oppressed people who asked for nothing but autonomy within the Czechoslovak state.[6] When the Czechs tried to make the world realise that Hitler was using the Sudeten Germans to disrupt Czechoslovakia,[7] they were met with incredulity. Neville Chamberlain, who was ignorant of the history of Bohemia, instigated the Four-Power conference at Munich in September 1938; he believed that by handing over the mainly German-speaking areas of Czechoslovakia to Hitler, he could teach Hitler not

[5] The distinction between Ruthene and Ukrainian is generally taken to be that between the Uniate and the Orthodox Church. For the Ukrainian question in connection with Poland see below.

[6] See especially *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–45*, Vol. II, No. 23. Henlein's Secret Report to Hitler, 19 November 1937.

[7] Masaryk had believed that a state with ten million Czechs and Slovaks could and should 'contain' three million Sudeten Germans, but with Nazi German resources the Sudeten Germans succeeded in inflaming Slovak discontent into separatism.

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to use force; he believed, that is to say, that he could prevent the Second World War.

Had Chamberlain been right, the price paid might have been worth while. It included an affront to the Russians who have never forgotten that they were not invited to the Munich conference. It involved the violation of the whole conception of Czech nationhood inherited from Masaryk; without consulting the Czechs the Western Powers agreed to the destruction of the foundations of their state, and then offered what seemed to the Czechs an ironical guarantee of the untenable rump that was left. As most Czechs had foreseen, Hitler used the Munich agreement as nothing but a stepping-stone to the German occupation of Prague in March 1939 and the total subjection of the Czechs. Later in that year the Nazi leader decided that some 50 per cent of them were to be assimilated, that is germanised: the rest, in particular the intellectual leaders of the Czech nation, were to be 'eliminated and shipped out of the country'.[8] By the end of 1939 the Czech universities had been closed and gradually most of the schools were suppressed. The Nazi reign of terror was intensified with the arrival of Heydrich as Deputy-Protector in September 1941, and again after his murder in May 1942, when the villages of Lidice and Lezaky were annihilated with total Nazi technique. It is not surprising that Hitler's attack upon Russia in June 1941 re-aroused the russophile traditions of the Czechs. At the time of Munich the Russians had easily led them to believe that the USSR was their only friend: indeed, many Czechs then turned their backs on the West for ever.

It has been seen that in their dealings with their eastern neighbours the Germans had long allowed a Pan-German arrogance to prevail; in Czech eyes all Germans were Nazis, and by manipulating the Sudeten German situation they had destroyed the Czechs' budding national life. This led to the Czechs' determination, should the war be lost by Germany, to expel from Bohemia and Moravia all Sudeten Germans who could not prove that they had been loyal to the Czechoslovak state. When it came to carrying out this operation in 1945, much cruelty and injustice and arbitrary decision accompanied it. Many Czechs immediately after the war were glad to persecute the Germans as they themselves had been persecuted; the fact that the Czech Minister of the Interior was a communist encouraged this attitude. In fact the Sudeten Germans as a community are indubitably better off in Western Germany, but their presence there adds to Czech fears of the Germans. On the one hand the Sudeten Germans are politically well-organised; Dr Seebohm, their representative in the Federal German Cabinet, constantly speaks of their right to return to Bohemia, and many Sudeten German leaders imply

[8] *Trial of the Major War Criminals, Nuremberg.* Proceedings and Documents, Vol. XXVI, pp. 375–77 (862 PS).

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that the Munich agreement of September 1938 is still valid. On the other hand the Czechs feel a certain shame, which reinforces their anxiety, about the way in which the majority of the Sudeten Germans were driven out.

THE Polish state of mind in 1914 was very different from that of the Czechs, and far more complicated. Poland had been an independent state until the end of the eighteenth century, and all Polish patriots aimed at its restoration. The social structure of the Polish nation was an elaborate one, with an ancient nobility, and a peasantry which merged into the Ukrainian peasantry to the east and southeast. The middle class, certainly until the later nineteenth century, was negligible, and its place was filled by the little-loved Jews. Until after 1860 Polish patriotism tended to be a monopoly of the aristocracy and those it influenced together with a few intellectuals.

The fact that Poland had been cut into three created at least three diverging Polish points of view. The Poles of Austrian Galicia were on good terms with Vienna; they shared its Catholic faith, there were many aristocratic links, and Vienna generally protected their interests against the Ruthene or Ukrainian peasants of Eastern Galicia. From 1868 most Galician officials were Polish, and Cracow became Polish nationalist headquarters.

The Poles who lived under Prussia and were then incorporated into Imperial Germany against their will were regarded with suspicion by Bismarck and his successors. From 1886 onwards the Prussian government took steps to buy land away from the Poles of Posen (Poznania) and west Prussia and to plant this land with German settlers; from 1908 Poles could be officially expropriated by the German authorities, particularly along the Russian frontier where most of the Germans were settled. In Prussian Silesia, conquered from Austria by Frederick the Great and thus detached from the lands of the Bohemian crown, the Poles, until late in the nineteenth century, were nothing but peasants or miners without Polish patriotism; the propertied classes were German.

In Congress Poland it was traditional to despise the Russians as eastern barbarians. This, together with their contempt for the stodgy Czechs, made the Slavonic Poles generally hostile to Pan-Slavism. It was only after the Polish rising of 1863, however, that the Russians suppressed the Polish language and dismissed all Polish officials: even then, like the Austrians and unlike the Prussians, they did not colonise in compactly Polish territory. At the beginning of the twentieth century the attitude of the Russian Poles changed, for Roman Dmowski, one of their leaders in the Duma, began to work for concessions within the Russian Empire. Indeed, in 1908 he not only attended the Pan-Slav congress in Prague; he also published a book which declared Germany to be the Poles' most dangerous enemy.

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When war came in 1914 a Lithuanian-Polish noble called Pilsudski, after a series of adventures in Russia, had previously organised its underground struggles in the Russian part of Poland, had already organised a Polish legion in Galicia, and he and many other Poles at first felt that their hopes for independence lay with the success of the Central Powers. As German talk of a German *Mitteleuropa* stretching to the frontiers of Bulgaria became more vociferous, it became clearer, too, that the Germans, especially the big industrialists, were thinking in terms of Belgium and Congress Poland as German dependencies. Further, German officials, as well as frank *Alldeutsche*, had since 1914 been working out details for the demarcation of a German belt of territory (*Grenzstreifen*) between Prussian and Congress Poland; from this belt the Poles and Jews were to be evicted into Congress Poland, and on it Germans, from the Volga as well as from Germany, were to be settled.[9] Thus strategic purposes were to be served and at the same time the Prussian Poles were to be more completely isolated. Such plans were not openly advocated by the German government but they were propagated in the German press. From the end of 1915 the Central Powers were in occupation of all Congress Poland, placed under the command of the German General von Beseler, who, like Hans Frank twenty-five years later, was called the *General Gouverneur* (it was a borrowed Russian term). The occupation in itself helped to justify Dmowski's anti-German views, and it helped the Poles to find out what a German victory would mean. Towards the end of 1916 von Beseler induced the Austrian government to abandon its plan for incorporating Russian Poland with Galicia. Instead it was now announced [10] that it was to be linked with Germany, in isolation, of course, from both the Prussian and the Austrian Poles. From this time onwards the Poles lost their faith in the Central Powers. By 1917 Russia seemed on the verge of dissolution, but the old pro-French tradition was all the more fortified among the Poles. Already, thanks largely to Paderewski's eloquence, Wilson had stated in January 1917 that ' statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a united, independent, and autonomous Poland ', and a year later his thirteenth point spoke of ' free and secure access to the sea ' for Poland, a demand made earlier by the Galician Poles. Meanwhile, Dmowski having left Russia to travel to France and Britain, in the later months of 1917 France, Great Britain, Italy, and the United States recognised a Polish National Committee in Paris as officially representing the Polish nation. After the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia the western world had a new reason to welcome an independent Poland as a buffer state.

[9] See Fritz Fischer, op. cit., p. 340. This author emphasises Poland as the key to the *Mitteleuropa* programme.

[10] This was the Two Emperors' Manifesto of 5 November 1916. Previously to this the Germans had considered a close association with Rumania if Austria-Hungary were in this sense to ' have ' Poland.

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EVERY student of Eastern Europe knows that the application of national and racial claims to this area has often seemed to spell nonsense. Many towns were predominantly German-speaking but surrounded by a Slav peasantry. Further to the east towns like Lwow (Lemberg) and Vilna (Wilno) were far more Polish than the surrounding countryside. The Czechs suspected all Germans because they had suffered from many, and they overplayed their link with the Slovaks who preferred the Poles. But the Poles were more gravely handicapped by their Ukrainian entanglement. The ancient kingdom of Poland had fitfully stretched far to the east, to include Ruthenes, White Russians, and Ukrainians who were Uniate or Orthodox Christians. Among these people the Catholic Poles had been the ruling class; the Polish attitude towards them had been not unlike that of the Germans to the Poles. For the Poles thought the Ukrainian language scarcely worth recognition and that the Ukrainians should be grateful to be polonised; it is only since the Russian occupation of eastern Poland in 1939 that the Poles have been unwillingly freed from their Ukrainian problem.

Before 1914 a Viennese professor occasionally discovered the Ukrainian nation, to the applause of the nationalist leaders in Eastern Galicia. But the vast majority of Ukrainians—their descendants are now united in the Ukrainian Republic of the Soviet Union—were inarticulate peasants who would not have known whether they spoke a Russian dialect or the national language of the Ukraine. From August 1914 onwards, German war propaganda fastened upon the national minorities of Russia and began to preach the establishment of a new Ukrainian state to include large areas ruled by Poland in the eighteenth century. Indeed, a Ukraine under German control was one of Germany's dearest war aims and was briefly realised by the 'Bread Peace' of February 1918. This was the last nail in the coffin of German-Polish collaboration.

By the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919 Poznania (Posen) and most of Pomorze (West Prussia or Eastern Pomerania) were transferred from Germany to the new Polish state; it was Pomorze which provided Polish access to the sea. Linked by a customs union with Poland, Danzig became a Free City (as it had been under Napoleon) under the protection of the League of Nations The most difficult frontier to draw was between the Poles and Germans in Upper Silesia, the classic case of a highly industrialised area where German economic pressure had germanised many Polish miners and metal-workers. But here, after a fairly ambiguous plebiscite, the League of Nations intervened with singular success, and, by imposing a fifteen-year transitional German-Polish convention, laid down a new frontier which gave the richer portion of the province to Poland.

To the east and south frontiers were still fluid in 1919. By the end of the year all Galicia had been assigned to Poland. The British hoped that Poland would accept the 'Curzon Line' as her frontier to the east. But Pilsudski, who had been made Polish Commander-in-Chief, led an offensive to the east in the spring of 1920, and in May his troops entered the Ukrainian capital of Kiev. The Russian army now made an astonishing

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recovery, driving the Poles back, and actually threatening Warsaw in August. In March 1921, however, thanks to French support, the Poles obliged the Russians to accept a frontier far to the east of the 'Curzon Line': in so doing the Poles made their own contribution to the Treaty of Rapallo in the following year.

From 1922, when inter-war Poland was completed by the division of Upper Silesia, until 1933, Poland and Germany were on the worst of terms. Almost the whole of German opinion bitterly rejected the new German-Polish frontiers and above all the cession of Pomorze to Poland to form what the Germans contemptuously termed the 'Corridor'. Thus the Poles felt insecurity and resentment towards the Weimar Republic whose leaders came to terms with the Soviets and made clear their determination to revise their eastern frontiers at the first opportunity. German military chiefs like Seeckt made no secret of their preference for communist Russia and indeed of their hope that an independent Poland would not long survive.

The Peace settlement had left approximately 800,000 Germans in Poland even after many thousands had moved westwards into Germany. This was a small contingent by comparison with the Sudeten Germans or the Polish minority in Germany before 1914; by comparison with the Ukrainian minority of roughly six millions in the new Poland, it was nothing. But in view of the attitude in Berlin, from the beginning the German minority seemed to the Poles a troublesome and arrogant society of traitors in the making, what was later to be called a Fifth Column. The Minorities Treaty, to which they adhered until later, seemed to the Poles unjust since the Germans accepted no reciprocal obligations towards Poles living in Germany.

WITH Hitler in power in Germany the situation changed. For the Poles the significance of an Austrian ruler of Germany was the opposite of its significance for the Czechs; it has been seen that the Poles had been oppressed by the Prussians for many years but generally protected by the Austrians. Thus when Hitler offered a non-aggression pact, Warsaw was ready to accept it without much suspicion. This policy, it should perhaps be added, happened to fit in with the personal rancours of Colonel Beck, a protégé of Pilsudski's who, after quarrelling with the French as Polish military attaché in Paris, returned to Warsaw to be made Foreign Minister. When the Poles demanded Czechoslovak Teschen in 1938, Hitler had the satisfaction of keeping the Poles on his side as participants in the disruption of Czechoslovakia. By then, however, important sections of Polish opinion suspected that Hitler's friendship would be fatal.

After Pilsudski's death in 1935 the successor Colonels had increasing trouble with the big Peasant party; its leaders pressed for a restoration of democratic government, suppressed by Pilsudski in 1926. As far as the authorities allowed them, the peasant leaders denounced Colonel Beck's pro-German policy as suicidal; their party was of Galician descent

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and in Hitler they recognised the heir to the Pan-Germans some of them had known in the Austrian *Reichsrat*. In Western Poland, with its vivid memories of German colonisation, voices were raised to warn the nation that the nazi programme might yet out-run the policy of Bismarck and Bülow and Beseler: this was not difficult to grasp for Poles who studied the activities of the long since *gleichgeschaltet* German minority in Poland. Finally, Hitler made his pact with Russia and created the necessary incidents—Danzig, as he himself said, was only a pretext [11]; the second world war began with the German invasion of Poland.

After the lightning defeat of September 1939 Poland was subjected to a nightmare version of the old *Mitteleuropa* plan.[12] While the mainly White Russian and Ukrainian east was left to the Soviet authorities, Hitler dealt with the rest. Western Poland, together with Upper Silesia and the important textile region of Lodz, was annexed to Germany and partially colonised by Germans from the Baltic countries, Bessarabia, and South Tyrol. Its Poles and Jews were evicted into a new *General Gouvernement* (this time including Cracow) except for two categories of Poles, the few who were considered fit to be germanised, and all the intellectual leaders who were condemned to immediate or slow destruction in nazi concentration camps. The Germans intended the *General Gouvernement* to decay economically. The Poles' best hope of survival —again there was something familiar but extreme about this—was the need for labour in the Reich; they were in fact impressed in the *General Gouvernement*, and sent as slaves in all but name to Germany.

As in the years between 1914 and 1918, Poland between 1939 and 1945 was subjected to a degree of devastation scarcely known elsewhere except possibly in Yugoslavia. Of course the Russian armies contributed to this, but not with the deliberation of nazi policy. And since in 1945 the Russians helped to restore the Polish state, albeit moved westwards and subjected to communism, the Poles grudgingly recognise a certain debt to them; to the west the Oder-Neisse frontier seemed to them acceptable. The Poles proceeded to expel the Germans from the territory east of the Oder-Neisse line from the same motives as the Czechs had expelled the Sudeten Germans, and with greater ruthlessness. And Polish fear of Germany is the stronger because the non-communist world has not recognised the Oder-Neisse frontier which is only guaranteed by the military alliance with Russia embodied in the Warsaw Pact. The Federal Republic, more openly than the Weimar regime, refuses to recognise Poland's *de facto* western frontier and does nothing to discourage organisations of Germans who publicly claim a right to return to their former homes in Poland.

Czechoslovakia and Poland, with so much reason in their history to fear the Germans, are the two most important East European states, the one in terms of population and the other in those of economic development: that Moscow uses this fear to her advantage has become axiomatic.

[11] See Schmundt Minutes of Hitler's address to his military leaders on 23 May 1939.
[12] See Martin Broszat, *Nationalsozialistische Polenpolitik 1939–45* (Stuttgart, 1961).

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BEYOND THE WALL

Stephan Thomas

THE Soviet occupation zone of Germany, which is being presented by the communists as the 'German Democratic Republic' (DDR), is today, as at the time of its foundation, a visible expression of the Soviet claim to the domination of Germany, and its integration into the Eastern bloc. From the very inception of the Soviet policy towards Germany after the second world war, the DDR has not been an end in itself but a means to an end.

Three theses

The origins of communist policy towards Germany at the end of the second world war are to be sought in a situation which was completely dominated by the military victory of the Soviets and their forward thrust into the heart of Europe. The consequences of this, however, stand in open contradiction to other conceptions of the Soviet leaders as well as to the implications of the different levels of economic and social development as between conqueror and vanquished.

The situation as it was then can be summed up in three theses:

1. The Soviets set out entirely from the axiom of power politics that in consequence of military defeat and occupation 'the conqueror imposes his system upon the vanquished'.[1] From this sprang the Soviet claim to the integration of Germany into the Soviet sphere of influence.

2. The Soviets were suffering from a traumatic fear of a German threat resulting from their defeats in the first world war as well as from Hitler's march upon Moscow and Stalingrad. From this followed a variant of their policy to weaken Germany and its potential at any price. This took the form of the dismantling of industrial plants, the deportation of many Germans, and reprisals against the vanquished, all of which ran diametrically counter to the aim of integration and ideological-political penetration.

3. Finally, the project of integration was also being hindered in that the part to be integrated was at a higher level of social development, at least where the development of productive forces, general education, and standards of living was concerned.[2]

The points of departure outlined in these theses are, with minor divergences, still applicable to conditions today.

Stalin's appraisal of the situation

If, nevertheless, Stalin looked upon the aim of integrating the whole of Germany as a completely realistic one, this derived from his analysis

[1] Milovan Djilas: *Conversations with Stalin*, pp. 114 and 153.
[2] See Walter Ulbricht in *Neues Deutschland*, 24 March 1962.

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of Germany's situation. His assessment was transmitted to us fairly accurately from both satellite sources and from German emigration circles in Moscow. Stalin set out from the premise that Germany after the second world war would stand 'at the zero point of its history'. The German bourgeoisie, ran the argument, was identical with nazism. From this it would follow that the German bourgeoisie, not only in communist eyes but also in the sight of world opinion, would be so burdened and despised that it could not, in any foreseeable future, intervene in events as an independent political factor.

What would remain when the German bourgeoisie dropped out of the game of power politics? The German 'revisionist' labour movement? Stalin denied even this. Starting from the bolshevist contempt for menshevism, but also from the weaknesses shown by social-democracy in the Weimar Republic and the 'blood tax' (*Blutzoll*) which the democratic labour movement under Hitler had to pay, he gave it at best the rank of a 'party of municipal politicians' which, in the game of power politics for the control of Germany, would have nothing to stake. Consequently, concluded Stalin, the communists had all the prerequisites to attain power in Germany in a relatively short time and to build it up into an integrated bastion, an advanced outpost of the Soviet state. To this end, he relied on the party machine of the German communists who had been prepared for this task in the Soviet Union, and whose advance guard under the leadership of Walter Ulbricht had been brought back to Germany as early as April 1945.

Ulbricht's Group

The group of communist leaders built up in the USSR for the subsequent penetration of Germany may be regarded as a special breed of men. This is important because the subjective attitudes of leaders play a considerable though not decisive role in the process of historical development.

What then are the specific features of the communist cadres thrown by Stalin into the struggle for Germany? One of the most important is their complete severance from their own nation, and from its feelings and interests. From the reminiscences of the German emigrés in Moscow, we know that their entire alignment followed the pattern of Stalin's bureaucratic machine, that their backbone was broken. At the time of the Great Purge they proved themselves by spying upon each other, denouncing each other, and purging each other. Obedience to and fear of their employers became the basic elements of their mode of behaviour. They gave up independent thinking and accepted instead the 'general line' issued from above, in which nothing could be either interpreted or in any way altered.

This pattern is most clearly impressed in Ulbricht, but is to be found also in all the men of the Moscow emigration. From this, too, arises the deep cleavage which has split the German communist camp since 1945: on one side stand the followers blindly carrying out the

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orders of the 'Ulbricht group', the so-called Muscovites, and the rising generation schooled and shaped by them, whilst on the other side stand those old communists who either remained in Germany, carried on illegal resistance during the nazi regime, or lived in exile in the West, where, partly because they were completely cut off from the centre, they were forced to use their own initiative and to reach a more or less independent political standpoint. This school too has its own younger generation.

The first thrust

In the first post-war phase the Soviet aim was to play for the whole of Germany, i.e. the role of the zone as a pawn in the game of power politics in central Europe was not yet defined. Through the control commission and through far-reaching demands for Soviet commissars in the Ruhr district and other west German industrial centres, Stalin wanted to play his game and to win it, as it were, 'from above' as well as from below. These illusions were quickly dispelled. Moscow realised that the balance of forces would have to be shifted by a quick penetration, coordination, and integration of the satellite zone, in order to create the necessary support 'from below' for a planned coup in western Germany and western Europe.

And so, in 1947, the first sovietisation campaign got under way, alongside the formation of the Cominform. At its inaugural meeting, Zhdanov defined the concept of a 'people's democracy'[3] and propounded the thesis of the 'two world camps'. The general line, which emerged from the foundation in Warsaw of the Cominform, proceeded in the direction of a rapid coordination of the satellite zone in order to prepare the decisive blows from there. Czechoslovakia, Finland and, via Berlin, Germany too were placed on the agenda.

The consequences were the Prague coup, which proved successful five months later, an attempted coup in Finland which miscarried owing to its timely disclosure (through the confession of the communist minister of the interior, Leino), and also the Berlin blockade. The Berlin blockade was the most far-flung operation devised. It was intended to drive the Western powers out of Berlin and thereby bring about the collapse of the West's position in Europe. Other events, coinciding with the beginning of the blockade, justified such a hope: in France and Italy, there had been communist electoral successes of considerable proportions, which in the event of a Soviet victory in Berlin would have become really effective.

Stalin's miscalculation

The failure of the Berlin blockade exposed the unreliability of Stalin's assessment of the German nation—a fact which the Soviets, however, neither at this nor at any later point appreciated or took into their calculations. Berlin was able to defend its freedom and withstand the Soviet

[3] See *Neues Deutschland*, 7, 8 and 23 October 1947.

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assault, above all because the population, rated by the Soviets as a malleable zero, remained firm. This in no way diminishes the services of the Allied air-lift.

It was the democratic labour movement, despised by Stalin, which took over the leadership of the resistance in Berlin which, in spite of hunger and cold, stood firm and determined. The progressive and democratic forces of the German middle class likewise played a not insignificant role.

In Moscow it was realised that 'at the present moment'—and this qualification is important because it left Stalin's basic thesis untouched—the breakthrough was not to be attained without recourse to war. From this moment onwards, the role of the Soviet zone as pawn and starting point of all Soviet power machinations entered its crucial stage. The zone became the chief instrument of Soviet policy for Germany.

On the road to a German people's democracy

For the development of the zone, two lines of approach were possible: it could be used, within the framework of the so-called 'anti-fascist democratic regime', as the basis for a policy of infiltrating and disintegrating western Germany, or it could be directed towards the 'transition to the people's democratic regime' while awaiting a suitable moment to overrun West Germany from this base, which everyone clearly realised would in any case make reunification impossible for a long time to come. Knowledge of the circumstances suggests that, from the beginning, Ulbricht clung to the second possibility, whilst a section of the leading communists, with the backing of a strong Moscow group, and possibly for a time even of Stalin himself, considered the first more promising. The decision was made between the time of Stalin's well-known Note of March 1952, and July 1952. During this interval the signals were set for the construction of the 'people's democratic regime' in the zone. This resolution was announced from the platform of the second conference of the SED.[4]

Laying the 'foundations of socialism'

The resolutions of the second conference of the SED placed the 'construction of the foundations of socialism' on the agenda. Concealed behind this formula was the rapid transformation of the social system in the DDR with a view to complete conformity with the USSR, a process which in the remaining satellite states, with the exception of Czechoslovakia, had already begun in 1945, and had been operative in Prague since the coup of 1948.

In particular, this meant the Soviet system of labour and payment for the workers, who were thereby thrown back several decades; collective

[4] Walter Ulbricht, *Die gegenwärtige Lage und die neuen Aufgaben der SED* (East Berlin, 1952), p. 171 ff.

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farms for the farmers; the ' co-operative ' as a concrete form of expropriation for artisans, retail and wholesale merchants, as well as independent lawyers, artists, and intellectuals in the humanist disciplines. Walter Ulbricht declared that this total regimentation would enable the DDR to ' catch up with and outdistance the West economically and socially '. The DDR would become a ' powerful magnet for all Germans ' who, in view of such successes, would turn towards communism and in this way bring about German unity. To what extent propaganda falsehoods or illusory and dogmatic wishful thinking played a part in these formulations is immaterial. What is certain is that sections of the Soviet leadership also gave free play to this wishful thinking and held, and perhaps still hold today, such statements to be realistic.

The execution of the measures of the second SED conference, which was accompanied by a reign of terror, plunged the DDR into a severe crisis. The dispossession of the farmers led to a breakdown of food supplies, coercion in the factories led to acts of resistance by the workers who resorted to go-slow tactics and to individual strikes. At the same time, the mass flight from eastern Germany rose to as much as 3,000 people per day.

The breakdown of the economy and the resistance of the masses shook both the Party and State machine. Rudolf Herrnstadt, Wilhelm Zaisser, and Hans Jendretzki drew up an opposition platform in which they made the ' people's democratic ' policy responsible for the crisis and expressed their conviction that, without reunification, the conditions for constructing the economic foundations of socialism did not exist. A dangerous struggle for power flared up between this group and Ulbricht. It revealed that Moscow was still undecided about the tactical line, or rather, that doubts had arisen regarding the realisation of the course decided upon by the second SED conference. The Soviet High Commissioner Semenov flew to Moscow in April 1953 to recommend a change of policy. Immediately after Stalin's death, the Soviet leaders decided on a ' new course ' for the DDR, which Semenov brought back at the end of April 1953. The central committee of the SED was compelled to publish this document as a resolution of its own making.[5]

In addition to the withdrawal of the harshest sovietisation measures, this ' new course ' also meant the beginning of a new phase of tactics in the policy for Germany, raising once again the question whether reunification was to be achieved first and after it the ' transition to socialism ', or whether through the ' construction of socialism in one part of Germany ' the policy of reunification was to be written off for the time being. The choice did not indeed fundamentally concern the function of the DDR as a means to the sovietisation of the whole of Germany; nevertheless each of the tactical possibilities entails material consequences for the situation in Europe, for tension or relaxation, for war or peace.

[5] *Neues Deutschland*, 11 June 1953.

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The experience of the period up to the 'new course' shows that the tactical line of the 'construction of socialism in one part of Germany' reflected the Soviet consciousness of strength, indeed their belief in their current superiority, because coercive sovietisation, the resistance it aroused, and the perceptible widening of the split in Germany and Berlin, as well as other factors, intensified the strain on the German seam between East and West.

In 1953, that is immediately after Stalin's death, the Soviet leaders lacked this belief, and it is this which explains the change-over to the 'new course' which, they hoped, would gain them a breathing space.

Despite the anouncement of the 'new course' on 11 June 1953, there broke out, six days later, on 17 June, a popular uprising in the DDR which, starting from strikes with economic aims, quickly developed into a political insurrection. This uprising exposed the absolute isolation of the communist ruling class, and underlined the bankruptcy of the line adopted at the second SED conference. Party and state machinery broke down in less than eight hours and could only be saved through the intervention of Soviet armoured divisions.

In the wake of the suppression of the uprising and of the ensuing disciplinary action, Ulbricht also did away with the opposition faction Herrnstadt-Zaisser-Jendretzki, even though it was their ideas that prevailed against Ulbricht's in the 'new course'. The Soviets gave permission for this step, as they believed that the strengthening of Ulbricht's position was essential for keeping the people in order and for preventing a new uprising. To be sure, they preserved the defeated opposition from the otherwise customary physical annihilation, but only in order to retain those deprived of power as a potential alternative in the background.

The so-called 'new course', which put a brake on the radical reorganisation of society and even brought a measure of freedom to the population, led also to a partial readjustment of the economy and to a rise in the standard of living, as well as reducing the number of those escaping to the West. The end of this course came at the international conference of Communist parties on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution in Moscow in November 1957.

The Moscow declaration intensifies the course

The representatives of the Communist parties in Moscow adopted a declaration [6] the crucial part of which hinged on the analysis of the world situation. It advanced the thesis that the balance of power between East and West was beginning to shift to the advantage of the communist world camp, and that communism was on the way to gaining preponderance on a world-wide scale. This removed all the impediments and reservations against an intensification of the course in Germany which were operative until then as a result of the collapse of June 1953. In the wake

[6] *Neues Deutschland*, 22 November 1957.

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of the Moscow conference, Ulbricht received the green light to place the policies of the second SED conference once again on the agenda. At the same time he received clearance for removing from power the opposition within the SED, led by Karl Schirdewan, which after the twentieth congress of the CPSU had devised a platform proposing to defer the transformation into a 'people's democracy', in favour of a policy designed to bring together both parts of Germany with a view to resolving the national question.

The 'completion of the foundations of socialism'

The fifth congress of the SED [7] announced the formula of the 'completion of the foundations of socialism'. In an 'historically short space of time', extending in perspective up to 1980, the foundations of a unified communist Germany were to be built. The theorists of the SED developed the thesis that the 'national question' in Germany could be solved only after the 'solution of the class problem'. Thus, according to the formula, the division of Germany need no longer be taken into account; the sovietisation of one part of Germany would have to take place first, and reunification would follow when the 'imperialists, militarists, and revanchists' in the Federal Republic were overthrown and deprived of power, that is to say when there, too, a communist regime would be established.

The practical consequences of this resolution were that the SED proceeded with its plans to collectivise agriculture and to impose Soviet standards and conditions, based on the corresponding laws of the Stalin era, upon the workers. In general, the shaping of SED policy clearly indicates that at this stage Ulbricht wanted to acquire and enlarge a certain discretionary latitude of his own, encompassing both the development of the DDR and, within a limited but expanding framework, questions of all-German and international policy. Confirmation of this assessment can be found in one of Ulbricht's speeches in which he openly admitted that the acceptance of Stalin's Note by the West in 1952 would have brought serious dangers for the SED and its regime, but that these were now past.[8] Also from this time onwards there was an increasing use in SED propaganda of such formulations as: there is 'no price to buy the DDR', and the Western politicians had better give up worrying their heads over it.

This question of discretionary power must be considered in analysing the policy of the DDR, for with it a provocative element entered into German and European politics which substantially increases the communist danger, without, however, being at all times completely under the control of Moscow. This is apparent from a series of incidents in Berlin and on the zonal frontier, especially after the erection of the Berlin

[7] *Protokoll des V. Parteitages* (East Berlin, 1959).
[8] *Neues Deutschland*, 10 June 1960.

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wall. Frequently the Soviets have had to intervene by means of clarifications and restraints, without being able on every occasion to prevent a more serious entanglement.[9]

The new wave of sovietisation

In contrast to the way in which the resolutions of the second SED conference of 1952 were put into effect, hurriedly and all together, the execution of the resolutions of the fifth SED congress proceeded only haltingly and by stages. The experiences which brought about the June uprising of 1953 were taken into consideration. The farmers had been drawn into the fight on 17 June only in the wake of the workers' actions, but they had profited much more than the industrial workers from the operation of the 'new course'. Collectivisation measures had been deferred, and the farmers were given numerous benefits to ensure adequate food supplies.

The decision of the SED to resolve the question of the farmers by way of sovietisation first, before tackling the question of the industrial workers, rested on the assumption that the working class was largely uninterested in the fate of the farmers and, indeed, that certain tensions between the more prosperous farmers (kulaks) and the town workers would at first even favour collectivisation. Conversely, the SED calculated that the peasants, once they had been broken in and coerced into collective farms, would later, when the integration of workers began, make it impossible for the village to support the town, as it had on 17 June 1953.

After intensive preparations, the wave of 'thorough-going collectivisation' started at the beginning of 1960 and was completed by the middle of the year.[10] All farmers were driven by open terror into the LPG (collective farms, discreetly called agricultural production cooperatives). The communists erred in their judgment, however, for the farmers, notwithstanding their dispossession and proletarisation into kolkhozniki, did not cease to offer resistance. On the contrary, in a surprisingly short time they developed a whole range of practices, reflecting a peculiar mixture of working-class and peasant experience, that carried the collectivisation experiment *ad absurdum*. Since the communists had promised the peasants that, as kolkhozniki, they would have a claim to an eight-hour working day, like the industrial workers, the agricultural population started a movement to ensure that this promise was carried out. This, together with a permanent 'go-slow movement', and a growing migration from the land, led to the disorganisation and collapse of the agricultural economy of the zone.

9 Thus, on 11 June 1960, Ulbricht referred to the question of West Berlin and Germany as one which he would settle if need be by 'a conflict'. This considerably aggravated the existing tension. Compare also *Neuer Weg* (East Berlin, 1960), No. 17.

10 See *Der Kampf der sozialistischen Staaten für einen Uberfluss an landwirtschaftlichen Produkten und die Erhöhung der Marktproduktion in der DDR* (East Berlin, 1960).

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The flight from the land had two aspects. The first, that young people in particular sought the opportunity of making a living in the towns, so much so that, according to the SED leaders, long-term enlistment in the army was preferred to work on the collective farms. Secondly, from the beginning of the collectivisation drive up to the erection of the Berlin wall on 13 August 1961, there was a huge exodus of the agricultural population, which ended up in the refugee camps of the Federal Republic and West Berlin. Entire families, work teams of the new collectives, and even whole village communities, took to flight.

The result was a supply crisis which reached its climax in 1962. Even in 1961, about 20 per cent of the arable area had not been harvested, owing to shortage of man-power. Ulbricht, in his New Year message for 1962, for the first time conceded serious setbacks in the agricultural economy.[11]

In the meantime the supply crisis has assumed such proportions that, according to the communists' own admissions, it will take some years to bring conditions back to normal. This in itself shows that the collectivisation was motivated, not by economic, but primarily by political considerations, the object being to get a stranglehold on the farmer, thereby making him entirely dependent on the regime both economically and personally, thus degrading him to an object to be manipulated by the regime. For the sake of this principle, postulated in the ideology and theory of communism, the SED regime deliberately accepts economic setbacks.

Having settled the question of the farmers, the regime proceeded to put into effect a new labour system which was laid down in the so-called Labour Code (AGB) of the DDR.[12] The AGB nullified all the workers' rights won by the German labour movement in its hundred years' history, reduced wages and various social allowances, abolished the freedom of choice of employment, permitted penalisation of workers by managers and so-called workshop courts operating outside the regular courts of law, and aimed at quickly increasing production while lowering prime costs.

It was apparent from the outset that the working class would not accept calmly this retrograde labour code which put the clock back to early capitalist conditions. The communist trade union federation (FDGB) itself had to admit that from the moment of publication of the draft up to its promulgation by the *Volkskammer* (people's parliament), over 30,000 protests from both individuals and groups were received by the SED, FDGB, and the government. An 'open debate' on the law, started by the regime, had to be broken off because the communist speakers at the discussion meetings could not carry their point against the bitter anger of the workers.

11 *Neues Deutschland*, 1 January 1962.

12 The AGB was also published by the trade union federation of the German Federal Republic. It appeared in July 1961 in Düsseldorf under the title: *Dokument der Ausbeutung und Unterdrückung*.

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The launching and enforcement of the AGB happened at a time when the supply crisis was approaching its climax. It became effective on 1 July 1961. Although the SED had hoped to prevent an interaction between its sovietisation measures in agriculture and in industry by spacing out the time-table, both complexes mushroomed into a constellation that can be described only as a potentially revolutionary situation.

It was in this situation that the Eastern bloc completed the final division of Germany on 13 August 1961 by building the wall across Berlin. The assertion that the wall was designed to prevent Western aggression can be shown for the nonsense it is merely by reference to internal DDR developments. Apart from the ripening of a revolutionary situation, the mass flight of workers, peasants and intellectuals threatened to cause the collapse of the DDR.[13]

The wall—declaration of bankruptcy

The primary function of the wall was to anticipate the acts of popular resistance and to nip them in the bud. Parallel with the sealing off of the DDR, a wave of terror set in which sent thousands of actual and potential opponents of the SED into prisons and labour camps.[14] By this means it was hoped to ensure the continuous progress of the sovietisation drive, without having to replace it by a ' new course ', as in 1953. But in fact the wall has made the position of the regime in some respects more difficult. Whilst the earlier setbacks in the economy and in politics could be blamed on the actions of ' Western agents, diversionists, and saboteurs ', this argument can no longer be used.[15]

Since 13 August 1961 the main emphasis in SED policy is to demonstrate that Soviet methods are applicable in Germany. Whether the Soviets will be able to sustain their strategy and tactics regarding the German question, or whether they will be forced to adopt new pragmatic positions, will largely depend on the success or failure of this line.

The SED is playing several cards. Now it tries to restore the ' unity of action of the working class ', i.e., to steer for a united workers' front; then again it makes overtures for a ' national front ' to the German bourgeoisie, underlined by attractive business offers. The general line for these tactics has been summarised recently in a so-called ' National Document '.[16]

The efforts of the SED to secure international recognition in the West, especially in Great Britain, the Scandinavian countries, and various states

[13] See *Neues Deutschland*, 14 August 1961 et seq. Before the wall was built, the daily refugee numbers rose to over 3,000. According to internal reports of the DDR government, which became known in the West, an increase of up to 10,000 a day was feared.

[14] Details concerning this were provided by the *Ostspiegel, Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst* in 1962. Issues 4–16 contain extensive documentation. This material has also appeared in pamphlet form: *Der KZ-Staat* (Bonn, 1962).

[15] This was the point emphasised by Mewis, the Planning Commissioner of the DDR, at the 14th CC Plenum of the SED; precisely because of this aspect of the wall great difficulties would beset the regime.

[16] See *Die geschichtliche Aufgabe der DDR und die Zukunft Deutschlands* (East Berlin, 1962).

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of the Afro-Asian group, and to discredit and cut out the Federal German Republic, run along the same lines. Success for these plans would confirm Stalin's assessment, and the conceptions based on it. To these efforts, which are particularly noticeable in Great Britain, belongs the persistent slandering of the Federal Republic as 'revanchist-fascist', designed to rekindle the animosities of the time of Hitler's war and to isolate the Federal Republic. At the same time, Members of Parliament are invited to the DDR, where they are courted and escorted past Potemkinesque facades. Trade openings are also brought to bear on these efforts; the Leipzig Trade Fair of 1961, in particular, provides a vivid example of this.[17]

Taken together, all these factors are meant at the least to uphold the fiction that the old conception is now, as before, a realistic one, even though internally it has to be conceded that so far all these efforts have been more or less in vain. Leading SED representatives have repeatedly admitted that they have had no success whatever in bringing the 'West German working class' under the influence of the SED; rather that the influence of the 'right-wing SPD leaders', that is, of German social-democracy, has grown stronger. Hermann Matern, in particular, a member of the Politburo, has said this repeatedly and vigorously.[18] The number of offers to circles of the Federal German bourgeoisie is constantly rising, all of them made in the spirit of Ulbricht's first, basic invitation to form a 'National Front'.[19]

The situation today

From what has been said the following picture emerges:

(1) The SED regime has so far been unable to achieve the total sovietisation of the territory of the DDR.
(2) The attempts to prepare the ground in the Federal German Republic for a communist coup have also failed to produce any results.
(3) In spite of this negative balance-sheet, Ulbricht maintains the fiction that the German policy conceived by Stalin is, now as then, capable of being realised, and that ever new successes are being scored within the fortress of the DDR and in the pushing back of the Federal German Republic. This version, even allowing for a few deletions, defines Moscow's attitude to Germany, today as before. In this sense, even today, Moscow gives Ulbricht strong backing, in order with his help to achieve its old aim of a united communist Germany.

In this situation it would be folly to assume that it would be easy to put an end to the SED regime or to persuade the Soviets to depart from their present conception. On the contrary, the Soviet faith in the

[17] Some Members of Parliament at the Fair were confronted with situations in which politics and business deals were inextricably tied up. This was an attempt at moral corruption by the SED of British business men and politicians.
[18] In a recent handbook for SED officials the same statement is to be found. See *Neuer Weg*, No. 11, 1962.
[19] *Neues Deutschland*, 18 December 1960.

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inevitable progress of communism, in the collapse of all non-communist forms of society, and in an alleged historical law of expansion of the communist sphere, makes it very difficult to induce Moscow to re-examine the theory laid down by Stalin, which remains valid and uncontested to this day, namely, that as a result of the second world war the whole of Germany would fall sooner or later like a ripe plum into communist hands.

The history of the last seventeen years would suggest that this is an unlikely outcome. Only when the failure of its present policy is brought home will Moscow undertake a re-assessment of the German question, and proceed to introduce changes more in line with the pragmatic and realistic modifications which, after Stalin's death, were forced upon the Soviet leaders in the Soviet Union itself.

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RUSSIANS AND GERMANS
An Ambivalent Heritage

Victor Frank

THE Russian attitude to the Germans in the last two centuries or so has been marked by a curious dichotomy. Putting it very crudely, the Russians have always despised the Germans and at the same time admired and even worshipped some of them.

Familiarity breeds contempt; but it also breeds affection and, occasionally, love. No other Europeans were, or even now are, as intimately known in Russia as their next-door neighbours, the Germans, particularly the North Germans. The word *nemets* (literally a mute, a man incapable of speech) meant originally any foreigner from the West, a European. Later this generic term contracted to mean 'German': to all intents and purposes, 'German' stood for 'European' in general to the ordinary Russian. And many misconceptions in the grandiose Russian historiosophical schemes about the relationship between Russia and Europe were due to the simple fact that the overwhelming majority of Europeans whom a Russian was likely to meet were Germans.

No other Europeans were held in such habitual contempt by the Russians as the Germans. None were liked as much as the Germans. There was, on the whole, very little viciousness in the average Russian's attitude to the *nemtsy* (with the exception of the two wars, of course). Even the ugly nicknames that all nations are prone to give to each other lost their ugliness when applied by the Russians to the Germans. *Kolbasa* (*Wurst*) or *kolbasnik* (*Wurst-maker*) or *nemchura* (a diminutive of *nemets*), do not have the hate-inspired sound of *Boche*, or the arrogance of *Kraut*. They are more akin to the good-humoured *Jerry*. (Why, by the way, the Russians should have chosen *Wurst*, of which they themselves are rather fond, as a term of derision, remains one of the minor mysteries in the murky field of national psychology.)

The Germans were domesticated foreigners. For one thing, hundreds of thousands of them had settled in Russia between the late seventeenth century and the 1930s, much as the English had settled in Australia and Canada, or the Italians and Irish in the United States. Many of them were military and technical experts, doctors, scholars, and artists. But the overwhelming majority were humble middle-class folk—artisans, tradesmen, mechanics, servants, shop-keepers. As early as the seventeenth century there was a large German settlement (*Nemetskaya Sloboda*) near Moscow to which young Tsar Peter used to resort to pick up technical know-how and to carouse in the beer-taverns. By the early nineteenth century both Moscow and St. Petersburg had well-established German colonies with schools, churches, welfare establishments, and clubs of their own. Some quarters of St. Petersburg, such as the Vasily

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Island, were ethnic German enclaves where little Russian was to be heard in the streets or in the shops.

Then there were the Balts who, being the Tsar's subjects, occupied a privileged position, and who, for the larger part of the post-Petrine period, supplied a substantial proportion of high-ranking officers, administrators, and courtiers, often excelling the Russians in their devotion to the Orthodox Tsar. And finally, there was the dynasty itself, largely German by blood since all Empresses (except Alexander III's Danish bride) and most Grand-Duchesses came from the inexhaustible reservoir of German petty courts.

In the countryside, North of Odessa and East of the lower Volga, there were compact prosperous German settlements—Catholics and Protestants from Swabia, Hesse, and Alsace, and Mennonites from West Prussia.

Many of the Germans, particularly in the higher echelons, intermarried freely with the Russians and, within a generation, their descendants dissolved in the ethnic ocean of Russia. Others kept their religion, their language, and their national identity to become that peculiar breed, the *russkie nemtsy* (or, as the Germans call them more accurately, the *Deutschrussen*), who were often more Russian than the Russians in their attitude to the *Reichsdeutsche*. I met many of them in exile in Berlin and in Munich and was always struck by their jingoist antagonism to all things German.

But it was not only the mass of Germans residing in the Russian Empire that made the Russians familiar with the German way of life. Germany was, beyond Poland, the first stop made by every Russian travelling to Europe via the northern route. Whether he came by stagecoach, railway, or boat, the Russian traveller absorbed his first European impressions in Königsberg, Lübeck, or Stettin. And Berlin was the first European capital which he saw and towards which he naturally gravitated.

For the proximity of Germany, and the abundance of impecunious ladies anxious to earn their bread by teaching their language to the children, made German the most widely-known foreign tongue in Russia. True, people did not boast of it as they did of their command of French. Ability to converse in French remained the mark of a man belonging to polite society (or, at least, to its fringes) until at least the middle of the nineteenth century. But German was certainly more widespread, and most Russians going abroad to study would certainly make for one of the German university towns rather than for Paris. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Russian scholarship, philosophy, and science were brought up in the German *Kinderstube*. This has left a deep imprint on the philosophic and political language; to this day it is easier to translate into Russian from the German, than from the French or English. The argument and the mode of thought are Germanic.

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AND yet, all this close knowledge notwithstanding, the Russians have always tended to treat the Germans with a sort of good-humoured contempt, as if implying that the Germans were lacking some essential component in their mental make-up and were only partly human.

This feeling of superiority coexisted in the Russian mind with an ungrudging admission of the advantages possessed by the Germans in the technical, intellectual, and even moral fields. In some perverse way, the very virtues of the North Germans, their thrift, their diligence, their law-abiding attitude, their sense of duty, irritated the Russians and made them impatient. This irrational feeling of superiority took many forms. On the lowest level it could take the form of a remark which a Russian peasant in a smelly sheepskin and with a matted beard once made to my father about his next-door German neighbours in a Volga village (where we lived in 1918–20): 'My, these Germans are a filthy race'. And when my father, baffled by this categorical and obviously absurd condemnation, asked why? the Russian peasant explained with incredulous revulsion: 'They haven't a clue as to what is clean and what is unclean'.

Like all societies who have preserved some vestiges of the ancient magic attitude to religion, Russian peasants (and indeed all Russians) have a clear concept of what is clean, pure in the ritual sense (*chisty*), and what is unclean (*pogany*).[1] A swill bucket, for instance, is unclean, and no amount of scrubbing will make it clean again. So is the cat's saucer. The German settlers, particularly the Protestants among them, were on the whole immeasurably cleaner than their Russian neighbours.[2] Their white-washed cottages were scrubbed clean; their furniture polished; their eiderdowns and linen immaculately white. And yet their Russian neighbours living in wooden *izbas* with blackbeetles swarming all over the place, with the entire family sleeping on some rags on the stove, and with the smoke eating out their eyes, kept on referring to the Germans as 'that filthy race'.

On a higher level, my contemporaries, Russian emigré boys growing up in Berlin and receiving a German education, going out with German girls and arguing out matters of life and death with German boys, would reject with indignation the notion that they could ever marry a German girl. They sounded as horrified as an American from the deep South would be if asked whether he would marry a Negro girl.

The great satirist Saltykov-Shchedrin described in one of his rambling sketches his European travels in 1880–81. As soon as his train had crossed the German border, he was struck by the high standard of farming, by the ingenuity of the drainage and irrigation, by the crops the Prussians managed to grow on their sandy soil, by the tidiness and prettiness of the railway stations. He thought with bitterness of the ill-tended, weed-overgrown fields around St. Petersburg, of the bleak and forbidding look of Russian railway stations, of the poverty-stricken peasants. And yet this comparison, so uncomplimentary to the Russians,

[1] Russian *pogany* is derived from Latin *paganus*, rural, heathen.
[2] Though both communities suffered from scab and trachoma to a frightening degree.

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was at once compensated in his mind by the old ineradicable feeling of a mysterious superiority over these clever, tidy, assiduous, and yet somehow stupid Germans. Saltykov added a cautionary tale illustrating this mental conflict, the famous story of *The Boy With His Pants On and The Boy Without Any Pants,* the German *Knecht* and the Russian *muzhik*. The satire is aimed at both sides, at the national characters and systems that the two personages stand for. The Boy With His Pants On talks in a stilted and sententious style; The Boy Without Any Pants, in a boorish jargon. The German boy is polite and tedious, the Russian boy rude and amusing. He asks the German boy whether it is true that 'his Tsar has a *guberniya* where apples and cherries grow along the roads, and the people who pass by do not pluck them'. And when the German boy confirms this extraordinary state of affairs, the Russian boy says with masochistic pride: 'Brother, it's different with us: we'd not only gobble up all the apples: we'd break all the bloody twigs off the trees'. And he goes on to boast of drunkenness, whippings, obscene language, the club law, and other attractive aspects of Russian life which the benighted Germans lack.

But the conversation ends on a surprising note when The Boy With His Pants On, filled with compassion, tries to persuade The Boy Without Any Pants to stay behind in Germany, to become a defector, as we now say: Herr Hecht—he says—would take you on as a labourer. Just think: How do you sleep, how do you eat at home? Here you'd get a good piece of felt to sleep on and peas and bacon even on weekdays.' 'Not bad—answers the Russian and goes on—But is it true, German, that you have sold your soul for a penny?'—'You have in mind Herr Hecht? But my parents receive a fixed wage from him.'—'That's what I say: you *have* sold your soul for a penny.' The German boy, understandably, gets rather indignant: 'But excuse me—he says—worse things are told of you: it is said that you have *given away* your soul for nothing.'—'Yes—says The Boy Without Any Pants with pride—yes, we have. But for nothing, not for a penny: that is the point. And what I have given away for nothing, I can take away again. You are a dolt, *kolbasnik*, aren't you?'

Here we have the perfect expression of the perennial contempt of a tramp for a slave, of a nomad for a peasant attached to the land.

AGAIN and again, we come across this innate and irrational feeling of superiority. The gallery of lovable Germans in Russian nineteenth-century fiction is long and impressive. In Tolstoy's *Childhood*, for instance, the only foreigner drawn with real affection is the old German tutor Karl Ivanovich Meyer. The two French characters, Mimi and St Jerôme, are drawn in harsher colours. Turgenev's old German musician Lenz (in *Rudin*) is one of the most appealing German types. So is Dostoevsky's saintly German doctor Herzenstube in *The Brothers Karamazov* (though even he is said to be rather too fond of his 'flat, dull, and always gleefully complacent German wit'). But the lovable

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German, a stock type in Russian nineteenth-century fiction, is always presented as a naive simpleton on whom the Russian author, the other personages, and the reader look down with indulgent affection. The one *superior* German, Stolz in Goncharov's *Oblomov*, is singularly unnatural and artistically unconvincing.[3]

The extraordinary inherent paradox is that, hand in hand with this superiority complex, there always existed in Russia a powerful pull towards German culture, a near adulation of German philosophy, poetry, and scholarship, not to mention music. In no other nation did Hegel, for instance, find such devoted and literally-minded disciples as in nineteenth-century Russia. German philosophers—from Kant via Fichte, Schelling, Hegel to Feuerbach, Stirner, and Nietzsche—moulded the impressionable minds of Russian thinkers. German historians and economists—from Savigny to Marx—did the same to Russian political publicists and economists. The whole group of early Marxists in Russia, which included Lenin and Struve, worked within the framework of German and Austrian controversies of the time. My father, one of the leading Russian philosophers of our age, owed his intellectual development to Marx, Nietzsche, Goethe, and Nicholas Cusanus (in that historical sequence).

As to poets, it would not be an exaggeration to say that, up to 1840 or so, Byron and Pushkin notwithstanding, Schiller was the strongest poetical influence in Russia. Vladimir Pecherin, for instance, that tragic figure, a brilliant Moscow scholar who, out of hatred of despotism, fled from Moscow to become successively a vagrant revolutionary, a tramp, and a Catholic monk, said that the whole of his life was but 'the logical development of the first two stanzas of Schiller's *Der Pilger*'.[4] Schiller's influence on Russian writers in the second quarter of the nineteenth century was immense. Zhukovsky and Belinsky, Gogol and Herzen, Pecherin and young Dostoevsky—they all stood under Schiller's spell. To the educated young Russians who came to maturity under Nicholas I, after the shock of the abortive 1825 rebellion, Schiller was a real prophet. The reality of Russian life was so harsh, so remote from the noble dreams inspiring them, that they would have despaired had not Schiller provided them with a supreme remedy—contempt for the empirical reality and a passionate conviction that freedom, beauty, and justice would in the end prevail over injustice and ugliness. Schiller's

[3] Leskov is the only major Russian 19th-century writer who did not possess this superiority complex vis-à-vis the Germans. In fact, his short story *The Kolyvan Husband*, is unique in Russian fiction in describing the assimilation of a Russian by his German wife's family.

[4] *Noch in meines Lebens Lenze*
War ich, und ich wandert' aus,
Und der Jugend frohe Tänze
Liess ich in des Vaters Haus.
All mein Erbtheil, meine Habe
Warf ich fröhlich glaubend hin
Und am leichten Pilgerstabe
Zog ich fort mit Kindessinn.

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peculiarly German combination of lofty revolutionary idealism with the largely abstract character of his exhortations suited well the state of mind of the small band of young men, hemmed in as they were between the crude and unimaginative bureaucracy above and the indifferent, semi-barbarous masses below.

It is not by accident that when the wild Dmitry Karamazov wants to express his ecstatic intoxication with life, he reverts to Schiller, to his hymn *An die Freude*. Of the nineteenth-century poets Zhukovsky and Tyutchev were completely at home in Germany—intellectually and geographically. Among the moderns Andrey Bely, Maximilian Voloshin, and Marina Tsvetaeva were passionate lovers of German culture. So was Boris Pasternak.

How is this dichotomy to be explained? It was not that fairly common psychological state, the *Hassliebe*: with the exception of the two wars the Germans, as a nation, were never hated in Russia. It was something more complex: a compound of contempt and adulation.

Two explanations suggest themselves. First, the dichotomy obviously existed not only in the beholder's eye, but also in the object itself. In no other national civilisation is the difference in level between the everyday attitude to life and the supreme intellectual and artistic achievement so blatant as among the Germans. Nowhere else does lofty idealism coexist so easily with a meagre *petit-bourgeois* mentality, very often in the same mind. Nowhere is character so divorced from intellect and imagination. No wonder the Russians became confused and responded to the German phenomenon in two mutually exclusive ways.

But there was something else, too. Compared with the Russians and with other major European nations, the Germans were essentially a middle-class (*Mittelstand*) people. They lacked the arrogant imperial grandeur of the English, the aristocratic elegance and intellectual facility of the French, the natural grace and humaneness of the Italians. The Germans—even the nobility—whom the Russians saw were essentially *bourgeois, Bürgerliche*—with all the virtues and vices of that estate. Now the Russians never possessed a middle class or estate of their own worthy of that name. And so, whether peasants or nobles, simple folk or intellectuals, they were bewildered and repelled by the social attitudes and ideals of this coherent and tradition-bound social group, so alien to their own attitudes and ideals. To the pauper and the *grandseigneur* alike, the *bourgeois* virtues of thrift, diligence, and careful budgeting, the acquisitive instinct, the worship of material possessions, the instinctive respect for the authorities (*die Obrigkeit*), appeared incomprehensible and revolting.

EVERY nation has a set of social ideals—largely unattainable but effective in moulding its attitudes and standards. The Russian ideals were threefold: that of a *barin*, a rich, self-indulgent, and independent man; that of a *Cossack*, a wild and anarchistic adventurer; that of a *saint*, a man free in spirit.

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In all three cases the central concept is that of *freedom*, either freedom from oppressive want, or freedom from obedience to the state, or finally freedom from the flesh and the world.

Amongst themselves they reserved the most vicious condemnation for something that they called *meshchanstvo*, a concept which originally meant nothing more than the estate of petty townsfolk (it still has this meaning in Polish), but which later became a comprehensive term of contempt for a spiritual attitude hide-bound by vulgar petty concepts. A *meshchansky* attitude to life meant and means in Russian, vulgar, banal, trivial, despicably petty, philistine. A cognate concept is that of *poshlost*, which originally meant nothing more than 'tradition'. (A similar mutation occurred in the meaning of the English '*common*', and of the German '*gemein*'.)

In a brilliant, but basically unfair passage, Mr Vladimir Nabokov once tried to connect the concept of *poshlost* (which he insisted on spelling *posh-lust*) with the whole of German civilisation:

> The Russian language is able to express by means of one pitiless word the idea of a certain widespread defect for which the other three European languages I happen to know possess no special term . . . English words expressing several, although by no means all, aspects of *poshlust* are for instance: 'cheap, sham, common, smutty, pink-and-blue, high-falutin', in bad taste'. My little assistant, *Roget's Thesaurus* . . . supplies me moreover with 'inferior, sorry, trashy, scurvy, tawdry, gimcrack' and others under 'cheapness'. . . . Ever since Russia began to think, . . . educated, sensitive and free-minded Russians were acutely aware of the furtive and clammy touch of *poshlust*. Among the nations with which we came into contact, Germany had always seemed to us a country where *poshlust*, instead of being mocked, was one of the essential parts of the national spirit, habits, traditions and general atmosphere, although at the same time well-meaning Russian intellectuals of a more romantic type readily, too readily, adopted the legend of the greatness of German philosophy and literature; for it takes a super-Russian to admit that there is a dreadful streak of *poshlust* running through Goethe's *Faust*.[5]

Subjectively, this arrogant passage is perfectly accurate: that *is* the impression German civilisation did make on the majority of Russians. Whether one agrees with it or not, the subjective notion in itself is a hard historical fact. But my point is that this identification of things German with *poshlost* and *meshchanstvo* was due not so much to national antagonisms as to a clash of social attitudes. The Germans were, in the eyes of the Russians, a petty-bourgeois, a *meshchansky* nation. And so they were, for better or for worse. And the Russians, rich and poor alike, were repelled by this alien intruder, who seemed to cherish duty and obedience above what the Russians cherished most: freedom from bonds of any description.

[5] Vladimir Nabokov, *Nikolai Gogol* (London, 1947), pp. 67–68.

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This revulsion did not prevent those Russians who were able to transcend national or social prejudices from admiring and even worshipping the intellectual and spiritual achievements of outstanding Germans. But the general *social* hostility to the German petty-bourgeois civilisation took the sting out of the envy with which all Russians were wont to contemplate the *material* achievements of the Germans. For at the back of the Russian mind there was always the suspicion that the Germans—to use the words of Saltykov's Boy Without Any Pants—had ' sold their soul to the devil for a penny ', that they were essentially an unfree nation, inasmuch as they did not mind this transaction and in fact were cherishing the ' penny ' as the apple of their eye.

* * * *

All this refers largely to pre-revolutionary attitudes. It is a paradox that for the first time in Russia's history a middle class with bourgeois values has been created in Russia as a result of a ' proletarian ' revolution. And it may well be that in the years to come the traditional antagonism of the Russians towards the Germans will abate as the modern Russian society moves towards that all-embracing petty-bourgeois (*meshchansky*) way of life which marks twentieth-century Western civilisation.

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RAPALLO: THE VANISHING DREAM

1950 *Golo Mann*

MEN are fond of arguments with which they have become familiar from history or their own experience. They are particularly fond of using them in situations which are far from familiar. Hankering after the past, they keep on looking backwards—back to that kinship of the Hohenzollerns and the Romanovs, back to Bismarck, back to General von Seeckt, back to 'national-bolshevism', back, in other words, to any of the manifold forms of Russo-German cooperation which are known from history. Continuity or, rather, permanency does of course play a part, for instance in the realm of geography. The Germans will always live right in the middle of other nations and powers. German politicians will therefore always believe that they have the choice of opting for the 'West' against the 'East' or for the 'East' against the 'West', or else of deriving spurious advantages from the mere possibility of making either choice. Similarly, the Poles will always live between two stronger and larger nations, the Germans and the Russians. This is a constant which can be changed only apparently and only temporarily, and which permits but a few, ever-repeated combinations. It is this element of immutability which makes the use of old arguments in new circumstances seemingly plausible and convincing. Yet in fact, present-day relations between Germans and Russians are basically different from those of both the Weimar and the Hitler period.

Relations between the Soviet Union and the Weimar Republic existed on several different levels. There was first of all the policy of the German Government, which was given official expression in the treaties of Rapallo and Berlin. Then there were the contacts between the Reichswehr and the Red Army and the imagined policy inspired by these contacts. Finally, there was the Communist International and its German branch. To be sure, there were certain connections between government policy and the secret policy of the Reichswehr, but the two were by no means identical. The leadership of the Reichswehr was never Republican and never loyal, and thus never really at one with the government on any issue. The German Communist party, even more, always went its own dark ways in grotesque contradiction to both official Russo-German relations and the secret activities of the two armies. It is nevertheless a fact that the German army owed much of its special position and its illegal political power to the communists. Again and again it appeared in the role of saviour of the democratic Republic. Again and again (in 1919, 1920, and 1923) it was given the opportunity to quell communist rebellions. That was the most important service, albeit an involuntary one, which the Communist International rendered to German militarism.

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The so-called policy of Rapallo was not essentially different from the kind of balance of power politics that had been customary in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Walter Rathenau, who signed the treaty of Rapallo, was decidedly a 'Western' type of statesman, despite his secret predilection for romanticism and army life, and he advocated the fulfilment of the Versailles treaty obligations to the limits of what was practically possible. To try to gain for Germany greater freedom of action and a weightier position in the council of nations through the conclusion of a diplomatic or economic treaty with Russia was in itself not a foolhardy venture or a perfidious gamble. True, the European system of the nineteenth century, which had been broken up by the first world war, was not thereby re-established and has never been re-established, but in the twenties the European statesmen did not know this. The British knew it just as little as the Germans; otherwise they would not have been quite so preoccupied with obsolete anxieties about French predominance as their policy showed that they actually were. A multitude of free sovereign nations, maintaining a balance of power among themselves—that still seemed at the time a perfectly natural, desirable, and attainable goal. Russia was not 'the East', not 'the other side', but just one state among many and by no means the strongest. The policy of Rapallo meant nothing more than an attempt to bring this state back into the concert of nations and to use it on occasions to balance the weight of France. There was nothing pernicious in this from the point of view of traditional politics. Not only Malzahn and Rathenau, but even Dr Stresemann, the most Western of all Weimar politicians, now and then made use of this classical diplomatic manoeuvre, as for instance when he signed the Berlin treaty of Russo-German Friendship after the defeat he had suffered at Geneva. Yet even if the German politicians had done without any such traditional balancing acts, Germany's freedom of action would still have benefited from the very existence of Soviet Russia. German interests profited from the danger of bolshevism as early as 1919. But the conflict between Russia and the West was then not the only one in Europe. In the twenties the fissures within the Old World were not yet so simple and barbarous as they are today. The question whether Germany benefited more from the conflict between Russia and the West than from that between Britain and France is at least debatable. In Germany's political recovery London played a much more active part than Moscow. It was d'Abernon, and not Krestinsky, who proved to be the most helpful foreign diplomatist in Berlin. It is thus quite wrong to say that during the twenties Germany decided in favour of Russia. At that time no such decision was necessary or even possible. The power to which Germany was closest and from which it got most assistance was not Russia but Britain.

APART from all this there were the secret relations between the Reichswehr and the Red Army. We know roughly what it was that the German officers tried to achieve with the aid of the Russians. But it

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is important in this context to distinguish between actual facts and events, on the one hand, and, on the other, the thoughts, writings, discussions, plans, desires, and dreams of certain individuals or circles. The former were a good deal more modest than the latter. Russian factories produced 300,000 grenades for the German army. A German firm made aeroplanes for the Soviet Government inside Russia. German officers experimented in Russia with tanks, planes, and submarines, participated in Red Army manoeuvres, and were allowed to exercise with Russian soldiers. That—as we know from recently published authentic documents—was the extent of the secret transgressions actually committed. The champions of this military cooperation maintain that, without it, it would not have been possible to conclude the official Russo-German economic agreements and to establish the business contacts which proved to be so highly profitable for German industry. But this is by no means certain. The establishment of trade relations between Germany and Russia was perfectly natural and could have come about much like the subsequent establishment of Soviet-American trade relations in which political motives played no part.

The events of the year 1923 demonstrated that the political gains which the German army derived from its secret transactions with the Russians were not large enough to make a decisive difference. The decade that followed remained free of those international crises which might have put the significance of the Russo-German conspiracy to the test. Bold decisions could have been made only in the period between 1920 and 1924, but they were not made even then. In 1920 nationalist writers such as Reventlow and Moeller van den Bruck dreamt about a partition of Poland. Russia was assured of Germany's friendly neutrality in the event of another war with Poland. Germany was assured of Russia's friendly neutrality in the event of a German clash with France in the Rhineland. But it never came to any of this. Nor did it come to the Russo-German military alliance, which General von Seeckt had advocated in 1922 and which (*de facto*, at least, if not *de jure*) was, it seems, also to include Britain because the soldier-statesman counted firmly on an explosion of the Franco-British conflict. One should not attribute excessive importance to all these writings.

It is just as well not to overrate the ideas which were floating about at that time—a period singularly rich in sterile acts of violence and singularly poor in productive achievements; a period in which the boldest exploits seemed feasible and which yet, thanks to American loans and Stresemann's diplomacy, quickly led to a state of sober normality and consolidation. And what substance was there in Bukharin's and Radek's 'national-bolshevism'? How much reality was there in all their claptrap, in their crafty and knowing overtures to German nationalism, in their hymns of praise for the dead lieutenant Schlageter, in their proposals for a common Russo-German nationalist-socialist struggle against Poincaré and Wall Street, in the snobbish flirtations of left-wing literati with the right-wing traditions of Bismarck and Scharnhorst? None of

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this survives except a few printed speeches which have a certain human interest chiefly because of the intellectual inventiveness and the impudence of their authors. Neither the Ribbentrop-Molotov policy of 1939 nor the people's democracy propaganda of 1950 developed or branched out from those earlier ideas which, just because they were mere ideas, could easily present and preserve the semblance of sincerity. The so-called *Voelkischen*—the nationalistic populists—who wanted 'to go along with Russia' vanished after 1923. Hitler's National-Socialism polarised what was left of this nationalistic-populist movement of the early post-war period, and Hitler's policy, from beginning to end, from his *Mein Kampf* up to his Testament in the cellar of the Reichs Chancellery, was always and above all anti-Russian. The Russians, for their part, up to roughly 1930 adhered to their official view that the most aggressive capitalist-imperialist power in Europe was France, and that Germany's struggle against Versailles was justified; but under Stalin this thesis became more and more of a pious legend, and actual German policy could do little to keep it alive. No one talked any longer of national-bolshevism. The Reichswehr remained a potential political power, but it was kept in reserve and was not used, and in the end Herr von Seeckt had to make room for less politically minded soldiers. This endured for as long as American prosperity lasted. By the time the economic crisis put an end to the period of relative quiet and consolidation, neither Russia nor Germany nor France were what they had been in 1922. The situation was a new one, and so was the way of dealing with it.

WITHOUT the Communist party the Tirpitz-Hugenberg clique could never have won the presidential election of 1925, which subsequently turned out to have been of disastrous significance. Without the Communist party the Nazis could not have been victorious seven years later. Even at its best the Communist party was useless. Its insane, in retrospect hardly believable, struggle against the Social-Democrats, together with its vainglorious and wholly impotent threats to start a civil war, greatly helped Hitler's rise and advent to power and, in fact, made it possible. These are historical facts which no amount of sophistication and Newspeak can nullify and which stand, even without the testimony of rabid ex-communists. The statements of social-democratic politicians such as the former Minister-President Otto Braun have furnished all the evidence needed. It must, moreover, be assumed that the prototype of the first totalitarian state and mass party, i.e. the Russian Communist party, had its own influence on the development of the totalitarian party and terror regimes in Central Europe. But it is not possible to say how strong this influence was. European fascism owed its rise to a great many different factors, among them the war itself; the German *Freikorps*; d'Annunzio's Fiume; the white terror in Hungary. Ex-communists, furthermore, have maintained that the Kremlin actually wanted the German Communist party to suffer defeat and that it deliberately tried to bring this about in the hope of thus being able to continue and intensify

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the policy of Rapallo with Hitler. This allegation cannot, however, be proved, and it is most unlikely to be true.

The official Soviet assessment of fascism before Hitler's advent to power shows how grossly Stalin misjudged the character and the dangers of fascism. This misjudgment seems in retrospect all the more pitiable just because it was propounded in such seemingly learned terms, with all the usual didactic authority of the Marxist schoolmaster. But the very fact that the Russians misjudged the situation so badly speaks against Krivitsky's view that their policy at that time was permeated by a far-sighted species of cynicism. In the beginning the Russians knew just as little as the French and the British what to make of the victory of national-socialism. Hitler, moreover, took great pains, during the first few months of his government, to stress the continuity of German foreign policy, with the result that, for a time, both the Rapallo and Locarno policy seemed to be continuing.

In 1934 the Russians changed their course away from Rapallo and Berlin towards Geneva and Paris. This was an attempt to return to the Franco-Russian alliance of 1894—an attempt brought on by Hitler, just as the old French alliance with the Tsar had been brought on by Wilhelm II. True, the swing from a policy based on the tenet that 'the main enemy is social-democracy' to the policy of the 'popular front' was sudden and sweeping enough to make anyone dizzy; but the new course as such, which the popular-front policy was to reinforce, to justify, and to embellish, undoubtedly corresponded to the genuine needs and interests of the period and, to that extent, was perfectly honest. Nor can there be any doubt about Litvinov's personal honesty; no man can be a liar in his heart of hearts who expounds his case, and his ever-repeated warnings, with such unforgettable precision and with so much patience and intelligence as Litvinov did. But Litvinov's policy failed. It failed because, after the assassination of Barthou, the Western powers never saw eye to eye with him and because they forsook him again and again. We cannot be absolutely certain how Russia would have acted if the Western powers had made a stand against Hitler in 1935, 1936, or even as late as 1938; but there is little to suggest that Russia would already at that time have suddenly switched round at the last moment, playing the tricks it played in August 1939. In any case, no-one made a stand against Hitler in those years—not because the Kremlin refused to do so, but because the Western powers did not attempt it. When Czechoslovakia was sacrificed, Litvinov's policy received its death blow; the surprising thing is not that it was afterwards discontinued, but that even after October 1938 it still continued for a time, though with rapidly decreasing confidence. The first hint at a Russo-German understanding came not from Hitler but from Stalin. Still, the offer was vague enough to leave the door open for the alternative which the Russians had vainly pursued since 1934. The game played by the Kremlin between March and August 1939 was a double game, a game with two different stakes; there was still time for the Western powers to show that it would be more

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advantageous for the Russians to back them. To the bitter end they did not show this. The Russian demands for a full military alliance, for bases in the Baltic and for the right to march into Poland in case of war were militarily justified, elementary necessities. True, these concessions would have endangered the independence of Poland and the Baltic countries; but this was so not because of the devilry of the Bolshevik rulers, but because of ancient historic guilt. A Poland defended by Russia could certainly not have remained the Poland which, at Russia's expense, had between 1918 and 1921 incorporated territories which it should never have had. The Baltic countries were no genuine states but ephemeral by-products of Russian and German impotence. To try to gain Russian help against Germany without its dynamism meant to desire what was agreeable but impossible; to try to use Russia's recovered strength against Germany while refusing to touch the treaties of Brest-Litovsk, Riga, and Dorpat was plain nonsense. It is said that if Stalin in August 1939 had declared that there must be no war, then there would have been no war. How can this be maintained? If Russia had joined the Anglo-Polish alliance on the conditions offered, it would have soon found itself in the same military position in which Poland found itself in September—morally supported by the blessings of the Chamberlain-Daladier Supreme Command, but otherwise left to itself. Even in June 1941 Russia's chances of surviving the crisis were still better than they would have been in those conditions; two years later Churchill was in power, Britain was engaged in a life and death struggle, and American intervention was near. From the point of view of Russia's own vital interests the Stalin-Ribbentrop pact is thus at least debatable; in moral terms, it was the well-deserved answer to the earlier political machinations of Britain and France.

THE abject cynicism with which it was carried out and the verbiage that accompanied it must not mislead us into misunderstanding the true character of the pact. In view of the state of Russo-German relations in the period immediately before its conclusion, the pact could only be carried out in a spirit of complete cynicism if it was to materialise at all. Words at that time had become cheap. Yet even the most malicious of Molotov's speeches in that period do not contain any good words for fascism; they are distinguished rather by a cold indifference to the Western war effort—an attitude that came far more naturally to the Russian rulers, with their sense of isolation and of moral superiority over the two warring parties, than did their earlier hypocritical eulogies for democracy and popular fronts.

Was the Stalin-Ribbentrop pact, from the point of view of either Germany or Russia, a realisation of the old ' Seeckt plan '? By no means. True, Poland became the first victim of the pact, and Poland was supposed to become the first victim of the Seeckt plan. That was the common feature, and it was an inevitable one. If Germany and Russia reach an understanding in terms of power politics, then Poland must be its first

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victim. There was, however, no more talk in 1939 of the liberation struggle of the two 'outlaws' against the victors of Versailles. The victors of Versailles had long ceased to be victors; Germany had the least cause of all to liberate itself from anything. Hitler's war was a war of conquest of the strongest European power. The neutralisation of Russia served him as temporary protection of his rear, and for nothing else. To believe that Hitler, after a victory over the Western powers, would have acquiesced in the existence of a strong military power in the East, that he would have been prepared to share Eurasia with Russia and to recognise the Middle East, the Ukraine, and Siberia as belonging finally to Russia, while he himself would make do with Belgium and Denmark—to believe any of that means deliberately to ignore the most elementary features of Hitler's policy. The fact that the war against Russia began in June 1941 may have been due to the military situation in the West; but why it should have come to war against Russia at all is explained in *Mein Kampf*. One can still read it there. It seems, however, that the historians of today are just as stubborn in their refusal to read this book, or take it seriously, as were the politicians, to their own misfortune, during Hitler's lifetime.

Thus one begins to find vague hints in the new textbooks suggesting that the Russians in the course of 1940 had made such outrageous demands on Hitler that he felt himself driven into a corner and was compelled to make war on them. Such hints emanate especially from ex-communists who, solely in order to besmear their former idol, are willing to whitewash even the nazis. These ideas appear to have their origin in the book *Speaking Frankly*, by the former American Secretary of State Byrnes. In the 14th chapter of this book Byrnes reports that it was Molotov's impudence during his visit to Berlin in November 1940 which caused Hitler to lose patience and to go full speed ahead with his preparations for 'operation Barbarossa'. And in what did Molotov's impudence consist? There is a plain answer to this question in Byrnes's own account and in the German documents which he uses as his raw material. It is not true that Molotov presented far-reaching Russian demands. He coolly declined Hitler's grandiose suggestions for a division of the—as yet to be conquered—British empire, and insisted instead on Russia's limited defensive interests in Finland and Bulgaria. These last Berlin talks, in fact, made it crystal clear that, from the Russian point of view, the pact of 1939 was not meant to develop into a predatory duumvirate for the division of the world. Nor, for that matter, did Hitler regard it as such—or at least only in so far as predatory duumvirates do not normally outlast for long the triumph of the duumvirs. The preparations for the offensive against Russia were, as a matter of fact, in full swing long before Molotov went to Berlin.

With regard to the period that followed, the period between January and June 1941, one can only marvel at the deplorable state of the Russian intelligence services and at the Russian policy of appeasement. A

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German-American commentator wrote recently that Russians and Germans simply had to cut one another's throats. That is not true. The Germans went for the Russians' throats. The Russians did not shy away from even the most grotesque contortions solely in order to evade the struggle.

DURING the last years of the war Russian policy towards Germany followed two contradictory courses. One was designed to eliminate Germany as a political power. At Yalta, it was the Russians who proposed the division of Germany, not into different zones of occupation, but into several independent artificial states. The same theme was sounded in the articles of Ilya Ehrenburg and the proclamation in which Stalin celebrated the final victory of the Slavs in their thousand-year contest with the Teutons. The same course was pursued in the Potsdam decision concerning the new frontiers—the worst of all those taken in an era which is not lacking in wrong, ignorant, and irresponsible decisions. Stalin himself passed judgment on it when he wrote, more than twenty years ago: 'to believe that Germany will accept this state of affairs is to believe in a miracle . . . Locarno, which reaffirms Germany's loss of Silesia, of the Corridor and of Danzig . . . will suffer the same fate as the old Franco-Prussian treaty under which France lost Alsace-Lorraine . . . Locarno is pregnant with a new European war.' Upper Silesia, the Corridor, Danzig—how trifling and harmless these sound compared to Germany's present eastern frontiers which it owes to Russian and Western wisdom. Stalin is certainly not the only politician of our time who manages to combine realistic understanding with a fantastic disregard for his own understanding.

The other tendency in Russian policy was pro-German. It represented an attempt on the part of the Russians to put themselves into the shoes of the Germans and to tell them, if not offer them, agreeable things. This tendency emerged first in the manifestos of the 'Free Germany' Committee as well as in the well-known speech in which Stalin spoke of the Hitlers who come and go and of the German nation that would remain for ever. To begin with this was above all a form of psychological warfare, calculated to weaken Germany's will to go on with the war. But it also indicated the realism which often distinguishes the Russian dictator; for of course the German nation will remain 'for ever' within that span of time in which mortals must reckon. And finally, it was a kind of policy in reserve, in case the other, which depended on the maintenance of the grand coalition, should misfire. In itself the pursuit of such a dual policy is nothing out of the ordinary. Other political powers, too, have often pursued, or at least considered, several mutually contradictory goals. And if, through all policy changes and turns, the same man remains at the top, then his personal utterances must become self-contradictory. Even so, the Russo-German case is a particularly extreme one because the effects of the first policy, that is, the Carthaginian peace of Yalta and

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Potsdam, cannot be undone without the most dangerous kind of revolution and because the Russians later on gave preference to the second, that is, the pseudo pro-German tendency, without daring, or being able to dare, to start such a revolution.

The congratulatory telegram which the Russian Generalissimo sent in November 1949 to the leader of the 'German Democratic Republic' recalled old half-forgotten tunes. Germany and Russia, it said, possessed the greatest potential in Europe for the achievement of decisive deeds. If these two nations agreed, they would become the unchallenged rulers of the European continent, and the enslavement of the European peoples by world imperialism would become impossible. Because it pointed the way to a happy cooperation of this kind, the foundation of the 'German Democratic Republic' was a turning-point in the history of Europe. And so on and so forth. This telegram recalled the period between 1920 and 1923, with its notions of a nationalist, socialist Russo-German front against Western imperialism and world capital. It also recalled the autumn of 1939, when certain German propagandists talked of the 'rebellion of the continent against maritime insolence'. The words were similar and were meant to be similar so as to arouse confidence. But the facts and conditions are not at all similar.

There are no longer two 'outlaws' getting together in order to regain what they consider their due or to transform the world through revolutionary action, as the late Radek imagined. Nor are there any longer two empires, one expanding, the other still defensive, opting for temporary coexistence. Today there exists only a single empire, the Russian empire, which, in its cold war with America, wants to subject and annex as much of Germany as possible, preferably the whole of Germany. That is the difference.

THIS is not the place to investigate the causes of the cold war or the question of Germany's real or possible place in the system of the world powers or between the powers. But one thing is certain: even less than the United States can the Russians afford to offer the Germans true neutrality, that is to say independence and freedom of action in the face of the Russo-American conflict. The Russian empire is Germany's direct neighbour, and its methods are direct and brutal. The centres of the American empire are situated far from Germany, and its forms are more indirect and more civilised. For America, German industry means little; for Russia it means a great deal. Even at the height of its power Germany was for America never more than a secondary danger. The Russian peoples, by contrast, learnt in the years between 1941 and 1944 what Germany's political and military freedom of action may involve. No impartial observer can blame the Russian statesmen for their determination to prevent, at all costs, the re-establishment of Germany's political and military freedom of action. There is only this—deception can do no good. Deception always ends in harming the deceived and the deceivers alike, and in leading both into worse and worse straits. Even

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today Russian policy towards Germany is a jumble of glaring contradictions which cannot be disentangled but only repressed by terror.

To read the manifestos of the East German communist leaders, it might be thought that the Russians had fought the second world war mainly for the sake of Germany's unity and freedom. But they did not, and nobody could have expected them to do so. Nor is the cause of Germany's unity and freedom one which is even today the concern of the Russians—not that of the Russians nor that of the German communists who, as everyone knows, are the agents of Russian policy. Threatened as it feels itself by both old and new dangers, Russian imperialism wants to control Germany as it controls Poland and Hungary. What makes this repulsive is not the objective as such, which is understandable enough after all that has happened. What makes it dangerous and repulsive is, on the one hand, the obscuring and confusing language in which the communists present their objective, and, on the other, the passions which they seek to exploit for the purpose of achieving it. There are their appeals to German nationalism, which in reality is quite incompatible with the aims of Russian imperialism, and their organisation of 'national fronts' and of parties for the nazi veterans. There are their patriotic storms of protest against the separation of the Saar and against the Ruhr Statute, even while they praise the Oder-Neisse line as a 'frontier of peace'. Whatever one may say against the attitude of the Western powers to Germany, they certainly have never yet been guilty of such explosive falsehoods.

It has been contended that in Eastern Germany it is not a question of one state dominating another, but of two states having made a common revolution, and of the free coexistence of truly popular people's democracies. Such objections might have been valid if conditions in Eastern Germany had anything in common with the great plans of a Lenin and a Liebknecht, or even with the fantasies of a Radek and a Reventlow. For the early Bolshevik leaders who, not by chance, are all dead by now, a revolutionary Germany was indeed to be the equal, or even the superior, of a revolutionary Russia; for to them, Germany and not Russia was the key to world revolution. Nothing is left of these ideas. They had to make way for power—power over Russia and Russia's power over other countries. Even today power is sometimes used for the realisation of revolutionary aims. But that does not alter the fact that it is power and nothing but power; that it is domination and an unending threat. And those who threaten do not live in freedom with those who are threatened.

There are others who admit this but who argue that just because the Russian rulers proved to be such cunning and realistic power politicians, they might well return one day to the policy they pursued not in 1921, but in 1939. The Germans—so the argument goes—are in the long run after all more important for the Russians than the Poles and the Czechs and other small nations of that kind; what happened in Poland five times in the past could also happen a sixth time; Stalin would at any time be in a position to evict the new settlers from Germany's former

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eastern provinces and to let the Germans come back, after which there would be a second 'rebellion of the continent' and a new Russo-German 'European fortress' to defy the oceanic world and to dominate Eurasia.

SUCH a combination is not completely out of the question. It would be conceivable at the height of a new world crisis as a last act of despair of Russian policy. But, for the time being, the Kremlin has far better cards to play, and it is highly unlikely that it will return to the policy of 1939. In the pre-industrial epoch of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the joint repression of Poland was the means of preventing war between Russia and Prussia. The events of the year 1941 demonstrated that, in the the twentieth century, this is not a function which the division of Poland can any longer fulfil. And this is a lesson which will not so soon be forgotten even in our epoch, which otherwise seems to have such singular difficulties in learning anything from the past. It is one thing to try to win the Germans over with fine words; to try to dominate them without undue costs and concessions; to try to have them both, Germany and Poland. It would be a very different thing to raise Germany to the status of an equal partner by sacrificing the smaller Slav nations. There is nothing to indicate that the men in the Kremlin would be ready to risk such a hazardous adventure unless they were driven to it by the most dire peril.

Most likely they will continue to do both, to inflame German nationalism and at the same time grant the Poles the Oder-Neisse frontier and the Czechs the depopulated land of Northern Bohemia. They will do nothing to resolve this contradiction but will suppress it by that ubiquitous and homogeneous power which in any case is the strongest, though not the only, link conjoining the new Russian empire. They will continue to show a benevolent interest in German neutrality. They will continue to sing the praises of German unity and freedom—and, indeed, a kind of unity is what they would prefer although the freedom they want would be that of the people's democracies. They will allow German officers to go on dreaming of the Seeckt plans and they will allow old-fashioned German diplomats to go on chatting about Bismarck and Brockdorff and Rapallo. That is the most likely course, and it is the most transparent.

The Germans ought to learn from the history of Russo-German relations since 1914 that their salvation does not lie in greedy dreams or in the apocalyptic alternative of either siding with Russia against the West or else with the West against Russia. No country has had so many illusions about power politics and has had them so completely shattered as Germany. It can no longer pursue power-political or territorial aims. There is something unseemly even in the demand for the restoration of the frontiers of 1937. Not only Hitler, but all German politicians, fumed about these frontiers so long as they existed. The system of states which had been created at Versailles was so artificial, so brittle, and so unsatisfactory all round that it is not a constructive policy to try to resuscitate it. And that applies even to the frontiers of 1914. Was Germany by any

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chance content with those? It is not possible to return to the past; least of all is it possible to return to an order of the past which, like that of 1871 or of 1919, was merely a temporary, haphazard order dependent on other equally obsolete factors. It is impossible to restore what has been destroyed; impossible to retrieve what was recklessly risked and recklessly lost. Germany today can only have functional political aims—economic, moral, practical aims. The vanquished Germany of 1945 still has the chance of doing what the vanquished Germany of 1918 refused to do—to break the vicious circle of quarrels about fictitious abstractions, about expansion, empire, prestige, security, and religions without faith. The outside world, and not merely the Russians, makes it difficult enough for Germany to use this chance. But the outside world can never fully explain or excuse what we ourselves are and do.

1962

IT IS NOT due to the author's prophetic gifts that the above essay, which was written twelve years ago, has to this day preserved a certain topicality. The German political scene has not changed greatly since 1950. What was begun with the birth of the Federal Republic and its sorry twin, the German Democratic Republic, has since merely been further developed, with Germanic consistency (aided and abetted by a larger, world-wide consistency), and driven forward to the point where the Berlin wall now stands. Everything that was done in that direction was done incisively. Everything that was attempted in a different direction, in the direction of German unity, was no more than words; and it was not by chance that the participants in these conversations, East German communists and West German liberals, or Russians and Americans, constantly talked at cross purposes.

A few months after the above essay was written, the new Federal German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, finally abandoned the chance of German neutrality by offering the Americans a German army, not as a neutral police force, but as an auxiliary in the cold war which just then, in Korea, had turned into a real war. In view of the Russian provocations and threats, this step was perhaps unavoidable. On this view the Russians were to blame for its consequences; the consequences themselves cannot be changed by such apportionment of blame. The economic and moral unification of Western Europe, which began at the same time, has all along been closely linked with the build-up of an American-European military force; and while it was just conceivable that Russia's slice of the German booty could have been joined to a Western Europe unified for purely peaceful purposes, its entry into an anti-Russian military alliance was literally inconceivable. It is irrelevant in this context that the Western alliance was meant to have a purely defensive character. In the history of diplomacy the difference between defensive and more than merely defensive alliances has never played a significant part. German re-unification

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could by then have been achieved only if it had been enforced by superior Western power. People thought about it and talked about it, but they were not prepared to risk anything for it. They believed they had military superiority, but they did not test it. Eventually they lost it, and in its place there arose a precarious nuclear balance of power. Berlin in 1953 and Budapest in 1956 demonstrated that the West no longer possessed a superiority of military power that was politically effective.

Hence the continued existence of two German states—one of them a free and legitimate state (which it is) allied to the Western powers, the other an ally of Russia. The latter is unfree and illegitimate. The vast majority of its citizens do not want what they have; but it is real all the same. Its reality rests on the lasting constellation of world forces and conflicts. For this the Russians bear a far greater responsibility than the other side. But that does not alter the fact that the Russians, too, are by now the prisoners of circumstances which they themselves initially brought into being. After all their experiences with Germany, they could not possibly let their share of the German booty be joined to a Federal Republic which was visibly growing in military strength and which was allied to the United States. It was not thus that their hard-won triumph of 1945 could end. As they could not keep their part of Germany for ever as a slice of war booty, they had to organise it as a state, and as this state did not want to exist of its own accord, they had to force it to adopt an identity which could only be a communist identity. Again, they could not possibly tolerate the disintegration of this state through the flight of millions of its citizens without endangering their domination over Eastern Europe as a whole. The Berlin wall—Khrushchev is supposed to have said—is admittedly ugly, but he himself had ordered it to be erected. Even in building this prison wall he merely did what he was forced to do—the dead end to which his own as well as American policy towards Germany had finally led.

The inhabitants of Eastern Germany were made to bear the cost, not those of West Germany; they, on the contrary, derived advantages from it. Without the partition of Germany, Bonn could not have developed its highly constructive, steady, and confidence-inspiring policy towards the West, and without such a foreign policy West Germany's prosperity would not have been possible either. Without the partition of Germany, Franco-German reconciliation, which only recently reached a solemn climax, would not have been possible. It was achieved between Paris and Bonn, not between Paris and Berlin; between two partners of roughly equal strength, not between France and a Germany whose inhabitants would number half as many again and whose economic strength would be twice that of France. The partition of Germany goes against nature; the Berlin wall shows how horribly unnatural it is. And yet the partition of Germany has also become the stimulus of a natural, positive, and highly gratifying development in West European affairs.

Nor is that the whole story. In pursuing a policy towards the West which is, not a national, but a European and an Atlantic policy, the

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Federal Republic has succeeded, for the first time in German history since the days of Metternich, in gaining the confidence of the West. This confidence is the basis of West Germany's prosperity because it is to prosperity, and no longer to political passions, that its citizens now devote all their energies. The two together, the growth of prosperity and the alliance with the West, have been responsible for the incredible rapidity with which the visible and tangible consequences of the second world war were eradicated from West German soil. But this very achievement has also given rise to illusions—the illusion that the second world war could and should remain without lasting consequences, not only in the West, but also in the East; the illusion that the allies owed it to Germany to help it to regain its lost territories in the East; the illusion that, merely because Germany's frontiers were not legally fixed in 1945, nothing had yet been decided historically and nothing had yet been finally lost, and that, so far as the East is concerned, Germany could and should again become the national state that it was before 1939. The Federal Government has abetted these illusions. It has done so with great moderation and great caution, even, it must be said, on the occasion of meetings of refugees from the lost territories; but it has done so—if only by never having sought to achieve a compromise with the East and by treating the question of the Oder-Neisse frontier as a taboo. It is precisely this that it should stop doing.

Bonn's foreign policy has been good, but it has been only half a policy. In its relations with the West it has moved forward from agreement to agreement. In its relations with the East it has offered nothing but a single, rigid no. No to the GDR; no to the Oder-Neisse frontier; no to the satellite states; no to communism generally. This thirteen-year-old no has not been of the least help to the Germans who must live in the GDR, and it cannot be of help to them in the next thirteen years either; it could, on the other hand, destroy with one blow all that has since been constructed and much else besides.

This leads on to the tasks of a new Eastern policy in the post-Adenauer era—tasks of which the Foreign Minister Schroeder appears to have more than an inkling. Twelve years ago, when I wrote the above essay, I still believed in the possibility of an all-German neutrality. Today one can no longer believe in this or even desire it. One can no longer believe in it because the trench which cuts right across Germany and Europe has become too deep. One can no longer desire it because all that has been achieved West of the trench, and which could only be achieved thanks to the trench, is in itself too promising and too precious to make its annihilation other than a catastrophe. Germany's Western policy must not be annulled by a changed Eastern policy; it must be complemented by a changed Eastern policy. The content of such a new Eastern policy cannot be outlined on a piece of paper. Policy becomes real only in its realisation. But the general direction, the aims, and the unavoidable sacrifices of such a new Eastern policy should by now be self-evident. Among its ingredients are the recognition

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of 'communism' as an enduring partner or opponent with whom one will have to live if one does not want to die with him; a relaxation of tension and an understanding so far as he wants it, for an understanding is inevitably a two-way affair; the recognition of the Oder-Neisse frontier; the recognition of the fact that Eastern Germany (they should stop calling it Central Germany) lies within the Russian sphere of power so long as the cold war goes on; concentration on the immediate aim of making conditions in Eastern Germany more tolerable, more lawful and more free, so that in the end—but that lies in the distant future—it could become a kind of Austria or Finland. To the same extent the West German-European-American partnership would lose the defensive, negative character which is today still its motive power. Then one could think about further steps.

I have met many a German politician who proclaimed higher aims and prouder national feelings towards the East than these. But I have as yet not met anyone capable of producing even the shadow of an argument that convincingly explains how such aims could in practice be achieved.

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HITLER AND RUSSIA 1919–1923*

Walter Laqueur

THE victory of extremist parties in a number of European countries was made possible by the chaos caused during and after the first world war. Movements of the radical left and right had existed in Europe before 1914, but only the destruction of the war, the ensuing political and economic crises, and the fatal weakening of the traditional forces turned them into strong contenders for political power. Italian fascism and German national-socialism were counter-revolutionary movements, but it would be misleading to interpret them as nothing more than that. The nationalist wave which brought them to power was set in motion by the extreme right, but their dynamism led them towards a totalitarianism far beyond the traditional concepts of left and right. Events in Russia showed at times an interesting parallelism. The first confrontation between nazism and bolshevism took place in 1919, when the young Soviet regime was struggling for its very existence against both native enemies and foreign invaders, and when the Nazi party was no more than a regional group of little political consequence. What Hitler thought at the time of Russia and communism seemed unimportant, for he was far from being a leading figure even on the Munich scene, let alone in German affairs. But it was, in fact, of the greatest relevance, for it was between 1919 and 1923 that Hitler's world outlook and that of his party were shaped. He hated Jews and he had the traditional dislike of Austrian nationalists for the Slavs. But, these two basic ideas or prejudices apart, Hitler in 1919 was still largely an 'unwritten page'. By 1923 his opinions had crystallised and they did not undergo any substantial change up to the end of his life.

A study of the formative political influences that shaped Hitler's view of communism and the Soviet Union during this period of apprenticeship seems at first sight to involve no particular difficulties. Most of the *dramatis personae*, their doings, sayings, and writings, are known and can be documented in considerable detail. There are, however, complications of a different character; the investigator is drawn on to seemingly remote topics. The impact on Hitler and his party of some German Balts and their friends of the extreme right wing of the Russian emigration was anything but negligible in the early years. Hitler himself, many years later, said jokingly that the early *Voelkischer Beobachter* should really have been called 'Muenchener Beobachter—Baltische Ausgabe'.[1]

* This essay is part of the first section of a study on the confrontation and the clash between national-socialism and communism in Germany in the nineteen-twenties and -thirties. My research has been made possible by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

[1] *Hitler's Secret Conversations* (Signet edition), p. 602. Almost the only ones to draw attention to the close contacts between the early nazi party and sections of the Russian emigration were communist authors such as Ernst Henri (*Hitler over Russia*),

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The Russian sources of national-socialism cannot be analysed without reference to events and movements in pre-revolutionary Russia, such as the proto-fascist 'Union of Russian People', just as the tremendous impact of the 'protocols of the Elders of Zion' cannot be discussed except in the broader framework of collaboration between right-wing extremists in Russia and Germany dating back to the eighteen-eighties. This in its turn brings up such problems as the origins of fascism and modern anti-Semitism. The transition from religious to racial anti-Semitism was a very clear process in Germany, whereas in Russia the link between the extreme right, religion, and monarchy was much closer. The Russian extreme right wing never fully emancipated itself; it took some hesitant steps towards social demagogy and fascist methods, but essentially it remained reactionary in an old-fashioned way, and therefore much more restricted in its social and political appeal. The same is true of the German Balts who played such a conspicuous part in the early years of the nazi movement; men like Scheubner-Richter and Rosenberg (despite his anti-Christian sentiments) were essentially extreme conservatives. They made an important contribution to the policy and the ideology of national-socialism—but the more radical, revolutionary inspiration of nazism originated elsewhere. Their impact on Hitler was very great indeed while it lasted; yet Hitler, who was an astonishingly quick learner, was also extremely selective. He realised at once, for instance, the enormous possibilities of the 'Protocols' and the doctrine of the 'hidden hand', and made them his own; at the same time he refused to take Rosenberg's general theories quite seriously and had a very low opinion of the right-wing Russian emigrés after they had shown their political ineptitude in 1919–22. But this is anticipating events; in 1920 Hitler was no more than the leader of a splinter group, one of very many; whereas the *Volksdeutsche* from Riga and the Russians from Moscow, with their greater political and financial resources, seemed important potential allies. In 1919–20 many Russian refugees reached Central Europe in the wake of the defeated White armies, but only a minority was politically minded, and even fewer were 'ideologists'. Of these few some had belonged in Russia to the extreme right or had turned to the right during the civil war; they now settled in Berlin and Munich and sought contact with like-minded parties and political personalities. In this search they met and collaborated with the leaders of the extreme nationalist and racialist factions such as Count Reventlow, Field-Marshal Ludendorff, anti-Semitic groups, and the anti-bolshevik leagues that had sprung into existence in 1917–18. None of these had a mass following, but reports were circulating about a new group that had just come into being in Munich and had assumed the name National-Social German

Kahn and Sayers (*The Great Conspiracy*). The grains of truth contained in most of these writings are however embedded in such a swamp of wilful distortions and outright lies about the democratic sections of the Russian emigration, 'Trotskyites', and critics of communism and the Soviet Union in general, as to make them useless for the historian.

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Workers party; it was said to be headed by an extremely capable ex-soldier who showed every promise of making his small splinter party the great and long-awaited political party of the extreme right. Some of the Baltic refugees from the Russian revolution went to reconnoitre and ended by joining it; after a short while they took leading positions in the new party. They also brought along some of their Russian friends, who were suitably impressed by the ex-lance-corporal, an excellent and forceful speaker. They, too, decided to help the new party. The combined impact of Balts and emigré Russians was felt on many levels: there were, to begin with, the ideological influences. The Russians contributed some important planks to nazi ideology, as will be shown below. They also gave political guidance and financial assistance that may have been of decisive importance at certain critical junctures in the troubled early history of the Nazi party. After all, as Hitler later said, the Nazi party at the time was a very fragile growth.

IN the search for the origins of German national-socialism some highly abstruse and improbable influences have been prominently featured, but the more tangible and substantial impact of refugees from Russia has usually been overlooked. There are two reasons for this oversight: the historians of the nazi movement have not usually been interested and sometimes perhaps not qualified to interpret influences from the East; language barriers and the great difficulty in tracking down the historical sources may have played their part. There is another, perhaps more relevant explanation: later events have overshadowed these early developments. The influence of the Balts faded in later years; von Scheubner-Richter was killed as early as 1923, and Rosenberg, after proving himself an utter failure as a politician and organiser, rapidly lost stature. In a similar way the right-wing Russian emigration became expendable from the nazi point of view after the Hitler party had become a mass movement. After the late twenties the relationship between these two groups was rather one-sided. Certain sections of the Russian emigration came under the spell of nazism, but they no longer had any influence on Hitler, who regarded them as political failures if not outright nuisances.

These later developments should not, however, hide the fact (as they have done) that at one time Scheubner-Richter was Hitler's main political aide, that Rosenberg's theories strongly impressed Hitler in his formative period, even if he did not formally acknowledge the debt, and that, generally speaking, the influence of certain Russian circles—from the importation into Germany of the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion' to the contributions in cash to the nazi treasury—was very strong between 1919 and 1923. Writing fifteen years later, a member of this group claimed that this 'modest bookshop (Mauerstrasse 15 in Berlin, where the "Protocols" could be bought in Russian and German), known only to a few at first, lost in one of the many Berlin thoroughfares, was nevertheless the headquarters of the splendid popular movement which ten

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years later brought Adolf Hitler to power'. Of Scheubner-Richter the same writer said that 'he literally laid the foundations for the movement which brought Hitler to power'.[2] Such claims are, of course, grossly exaggerated; everybody in 1933 wanted to climb on the nazi bandwaggon and to appear an '*alter Kämpfer*'. But below the bombast and the historical embroidery there is an element of truth that deserves examination.

In January 1919, a few weeks after the end of the first world war and the overthrow of the monarchy in Germany, Anton Drexler, a Munich locksmith, founded in a suburban beerhall a new political group, the 'Deutsche Arbeiterpartei'. Political organisations mushroomed at that time, most of them small and insignificant; Drexler's group was undoubtedly one of the least important, for even many months later it had no more than half a dozen members. This diminutive group did not escape the attention of the local Reichswehr command which supervised and, to a certain extent, collaborated with all the extreme right-wing factions. On 12 September 1919, Adolf Hitler, lance-corporal with the temporary and unofficial rank of political officer (Bildungsoffizier) proceeded to the Sternecker, a Munich pub, to report to the army authorities about Drexler's group. After the meeting he decided, not without hesitation, to join the group.[3] Hitler soon became its main propagandist; his appearances as a speaker were extremely successful and attendance at party meetings grew steadily; but it was only in July 1921 that Hitler assumed its leadership; before that date it had been led by a committee.

The party continued to grow during 1922 and spread from Munich to some other Bavarian cities; the Storm troops (SA) were founded to terrorise the party's opponents, and in January 1923 the nazis held their first *Reichsparteitag*, or national congress, in Munich. The party had remained regional (Bavarian) in character, but its fame spread throughout Germany and Adolf Hitler had become a national figure in German politics before the unsuccessful putsch of November 1923 which temporarily put an end to nazi activities.

IT is not easy to reconstruct in detail the political platform of the early Nazi party; admittedly its programme was published as early as February 1920, and the party organised countless meetings and demonstrations; but the records of its early days are incomplete. In most instances only summaries of speeches have been preserved. Only in December 1920 did the party acquire its official press organ, the *Voelkischer Beobachter*. In broad outline the general orientation of the party was fairly clear: it stood to the extreme right, its main propaganda was directed against the 'November criminals' (the social-democrats and

[2] Count N. D. Zhevakhov, *Sergei Aleksandrovich Nilus*: Kratkii ocherk zhizni i deatelnosti (Novi Sad, 1936), pp. 67, 69.

[3] *Mein Kampf* (first edition, 1925, vol. I, p. 231); E. Deuerlein, 'Hitler's Eintritt in die Politik und die Reichswehr', in *Vierteljahreshefte fuer Zeitgeschichte*, VII, 1959, pp. 177–227.

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democrats) who had stabbed the victorious German army in the back and accepted the Versailles treaty; it stood for a bigger Germany (*Grossdeutschland*), and it was, above all, anti-Semitic, since 'the Jews are the source of all our evils'. There were many such groups in Germany at the time; the Nazi party stood out as being more radical in its approach, more unbridled in its propaganda.

Hitler has generally been described as a rabid anti-communist from the very first hour; the success of his party in Munich has in effect been explained as the reaction of the middle class (and the lower middle class) against the shortlived Soviet republic in the Bavarian capital in April 1919. Closer investigation suggests doubts; Hitler and the Nazi party in the very early days by no means regarded communism as their main enemy and the chief danger for the German people. This conviction came only in the later twenties, when the danger had in fact receded. Among the main propaganda theses formulated by Hitler, the 'struggle against Marxism' took third place, after the fight against the Jews and the peace treaties.[4] 'Marxism', moreover, meant in nine cases out of ten, the ruling social-democrats, not the communists. This appears, inter alia, from a curious and little known book by Dietrich Eckart, *Bolshevism from Moses to Lenin: A Dialogue between Adolf Hitler and me*.[5] Dietrich Eckart, an early member of the party, a critic and poet of sorts who contributed largely to party funds, was one of the main formative influences on Hitler during the early period. But despite the suggestive title, this book (which presents the two leaders thinking aloud) contains practically nothing about communism; there are observations on Jewish history, the Talmud, and various other subjects including social-democracy from Ebert to Martov—but nothing on bolshevism. This is perhaps not altogether surprising, for the nazi attitude towards the German communists, whom they sought to influence and if possible to win over, was by no means as consistent as subsequently described. Thus, for instance, Dietrich Eckart and Gottfried Feder appeared in Nuremberg in the autumn of 1919 in an unsuccessful attempt to win adherents among the local communists.[6] Several months later Eckart said in a speech at a party assembly in Munich that the communists of German origin did not lack idealism; unconsciously and unintentionally they, too, were working for the common good—meaning Germany's salvation.[7] In an article entitled 'German and Jewish Bolshevism' in his own journal, Eckart came out squarely for what he defined as 'German Bolshevism', summoning the well-to-do to give up their

[4] In the early internal circular letters (*Rundschreiben*) of the party (file 97 in the Berlin Document Centre) the communist issue figured hardly at all.

[5] Munich, 1924. The conversations were actually written down in 1922–23. A second part was promised but never materialised. Eckart died in 1924 while Hitler was in Landsberg prison. Hitler said about Eckart in 1942: 'He shone in our eyes like the polar star . . . at the time, I was intellectually a child still on the bottle'. *Hitler's Secret Conversations*, p. 222.

[6] *Mitteilungen* (des Verbandes fuer die Abwehr des Antisemitismus), 18 September 1919.

[7] Speech in the Gasthaus 'Deutsches Reich' on 5 February 1920. Akten Wiegand, file 1315 in NSDAP Hauptarchiv (in BDC).

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profits [8]; like Hitler, he had accepted Feder's appeal for the destruction of the 'yoke of interest' (*Brechung der Zinsknechtschaft*) which was first propagated in Eckart's newspaper and then became an ill-starred plank in the Nazi party programme.

Count Reventlow, subsequently a leading nazi figure in Berlin and member of the Reichstag, showed similar vacillations: he was one of the main propagandists of the 'Protocols' in Germany,[9] but this did not prevent him from flirting for a time with Radek and even writing for the *Rote Fahne*, the central newspaper of the German communists. Similar inconsistencies can be detected even in the appearances of Hitler at that time. At a meeting with Austrian national-socialists in Salzburg in August 1920, he declared that he would prefer to be hanged in a bolshevik Germany to attaining salvation (*selig werden*) in a French Germany.[10] At a public meeting in Munich in February 1921 he said that he would rather 500,000 rifles were given to the (German) communists than delivered to the Entente.[11] These were no accidental slips; a close investigation of early nazi literature and activities shows that the communist issue was in those days a subsidiary question for Hitler and his political friends. In 1921 a gradual change set in which continued in 1922 and which had more or less reached completion when Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* in 1924. For his gradual anti-communist indoctrination, Hitler owed most to Alfred Rosenberg, a Baltic emigré and a Russian citizen who had arrived in Munich in winter 1918–19 and joined the Nazi party when it still had fewer than 200 members. Textual conformity can be established between Hitler's early anti-Russian and anti-communist speeches, the relevant passages in *Mein Kampf*, and the writings of Alfred Rosenberg.[12] Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter, another refugee from Riga, also had much influence on Hitler,[13] and through him Hitler came to know some leading right-wing Russian emigrés, who had at that time established their headquarters in Munich —the most promising choice for a Russian Koblenz.

From these quarters Hitler adopted the idea of anti-bolshevism as a central plank in nazi ideology and propaganda, the equation Bolshevism = World Jewry. Whether and to what degree Hitler really believed in all this (as Rosenberg and Scheubner-Richter, fanatical anti-communists,

8 *Auf Gut Deutsch*, No. 23, 16 August 1919.

9 *Der Vorposten*, 1921, p. 196: 'Die Weisen von Zion, London und Berlin'.

10 Alexander Schilling; *Dr Walter Riehl und die Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus* (Leipzig, 1933), p. 247.

11 *Muenchner Post*, 7 February 1921.

12 Compare for instance one of the few Hitler speeches preserved from summer 1922 (*Das Buch der NSDAP*, Berlin, 1934, p. 88 et seq.) with the writings of Rosenberg such as *Pest in Russland* (Muenchen, 1922), or *Die Totengraeber Russlands* (English translation *The grave-diggers of Russia*, London, n.d.).

13 On S.-R.'s influence most historians are agreed from the early anti-nazi Konrad Heiden who wrote that S.R. 'entirely dazzled Hitler and won a fateful political influence over him' (*Adolf Hitler*, Zurich, 1936, p. 115), to the most recent chronicler, G. Franz-Willing, who certainly cannot be accused of an excessive anti-nazi bias. He reports that Hitler exclaimed after S.-R.'s death in 1923: 'All are replaceable, but not he' (loc. cit., p. 133).

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undoubtedly did), and to what extent he merely regarded it as a useful myth in his domestic, and a good weapon in his foreign, policy is another question.

WHETHER Hitler believed in his own propaganda or not, what matters in this context is the effect it had. Throughout his political life Hitler had a sneaking admiration for Stalin and Russian bolshevism, though not for the German communists. Goebbels and some other nazi leaders reacted in a similar way. Very different was the attitude of the German Balts such as Rosenberg and Scheubner-Richter; they had been the first to be confronted with bolshevism and they wanted no compromise or half-hearted measures against it. They were greater German patriots than the *Reichsdeutsche* themselves, as were the German nationalists in Austria. In the Baltic this was a development of comparatively recent date; until about 1905 they had been loyal subjects of the Tsar, but after the revolution of 1905 this traditional loyalty had been wearing thin. There had been, in fact, a fairly radical switch of ideological and political allegiances by the leaders of the Baltic Germans during the decade between 1905 and 1914.[14] Not all these German Balts followed their leaders, but the group as a whole felt itself in great danger from the rising wave of Latvian and Estonian nationalism on the one hand and the radical socialist attacks on their dominant political and social positions on the other.[15]

Both the revolution of 1905 and the repression following it had been more violent in the Baltic than in any other part of the Russian empire. Many baronial manor houses were destroyed by peasants and workers in the uprising of 1905, and in the 'pacification' that followed seven hundred agitators were sentenced to death, in addition to the hundreds killed without formality.[16] Among the Balts the feeling of isolation grew, and they realised that the Tsar, their traditional protector, would not be able to help them much longer. In these circumstances a rapprochement with Germany was the logical conclusion. There had been, of course, close cultural ties all along. These were now complemented by an ideological reorientation. It was only natural that the Baltic Germans should show particular interest in the racial and imperialist trends that were enjoying a revival in the Wilhelmian Germany of the day. Members of leading families such as Stackelberg and Manteuffel-Katzdange preached extremist nationalist doctrines both at home and in the Reich. It was in this political climate that the Rosenbergs, Scheubner-Richters, and their whole generation grew up between the turn of the century and the Russian revolution. They welcomed the occupation by the Kaiser's

[14] C. Leonard Lundin, 'The Road from Tsar to Kaiser: Changing loyalties of the Baltic Germans, 1905–1914'; in *Journal of Central European Affairs*, October 1950.

[15] Neither Scheubner-Richter nor Rosenberg came from aristocratic families; the former adopted the 'von' and the hyphenated name on his marriage to Mathilde von Scheubner, who, incidentally, was his senior by some eighteen years.

[16] Lundin, loc. cit., pp. 234–35.

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armies during the first world war, and after the great debacle of 1919 many of this generation preferred to migrate to Germany, particularly the intellectuals among them who were not tied to the Baltic countries by estates or business interests.

The Balts, one of the smallest German tribes, were also one of the most cultured and vocal of all German groups. Their political influence in Germany was out of all proportion to their number. Some had been prominent writers or advisers on foreign policy in Wilhelmian Germany (such as Theodor Schieman, editor of the influential *Kreuzzeitung*, or Paul Rohrbach, the most popular and persuasive of the apologists of German imperialism). They were now joined by a sizeable group of younger and far more radical compatriots. Even the few Baltic liberals who had advocated cooperation with the Russian democrats back in 1905 were influenced by this radicalisation and were to play a fateful role in Weimar Germany.[17] Embittered by their experience as individuals and as a group in Courland and Livonia, these German Balts felt a mission to warn the German people against the dangers looming from the East. In Adolf Hitler and his party they found recruits only too willing to learn.

SCHEUBNER-RICHTER

MAX ERWIN VON SCHEUBNER-RICHTER is the great mystery man of early nazi history. Much confusion persists about his antecedents, his profession, his activities during the first world war; everything, in fact, concerning a man who hardly ever appeared in the limelight, is shrouded in secrecy.[18] He was killed in the Hitler *putsch* in November 1923, and thus became one of the earliest martyrs of the nazi movement. He should have entered nazi hagiography as one of its patron saints, as did Dietrich Eckart. Yet in the Third Reich he was more than half forgotten, though he had been one of Hitler's closest confidants. Arm in arm he went with Hitler on that fateful march on 9 November 1923; when he was hit by a bullet, his fall dislocated Hitler's shoulder. Hitler perhaps did not want to be reminded in later years of one who had helped him so much in the early days and who had been closest to him in the hour of danger.[19]

17 E. F. Sommer, *Die Einigungsbestrebungen der Deutschen im Vorkriegs-Russland* (1905–1914), p. 64; 'Deutschbalten und die Vergiftung des deutschen Volkes', in *Mitteilungen* (des Verbandes für die Abwehr des Antisemitismus) 24 November 1921, p. 143.

18 Heiden (loc. cit., p. 115) mistakenly calls him an actor by profession; Alan Bullock (*Hitler*) thinks that S.-R. was a Russian agent who passed to the German side during the first world war. Even a recent historian (H. H. Hofmann, *Der Hitlerputsch*, Munich, 1961) calls S.-R. an elderly East Prussian; he was neither.

19 A biography that is almost entirely devoted to the first world war was published by a friend of S.-R. during the Third Reich by a provincial publishing house: Paul Leverkuehn, *Posten auf ewiger Wache*. Aus dem abenteuerlichen Leben des Max von Scheubner-Richter (Essen, 1938). Dr. Leverkuehn was seconded to the German foreign service in Turkey during the first world war and again as intelligence agent during the second. He compares S.-R. with the German 'Lawrences', the Wassmuths, von Hentigs, etc.

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Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter was born in 1884 into a German Baltic family. As a young man he served with a Cossack regiment and helped to organise the German settlers' ' self-defence ' in the 1905 revolution. Around 1910 he went to Germany, studied engineering at Munich, served in an aristocratic Munich regiment, the *Chevaux legers*, and became a German citizen. Politically he was not active during this period; he was influenced by the then fashionable teachings of Freidrich Naumann, who coupled a belief in a strong German national mission with vague socialist leanings. Scheubner-Richter combined considerable physical assurance with linguistic facility and an ability to make friends and influence people [20]; he seemed cut out to be a diplomat. He saw service on the Western front but was soon called to serve his adopted country in a minor diplomatic function (consul in Erzerum). The *grand seigneur* also had a pronounced adventurous streak in him, and engaged in various perilous expeditions to mountain Kurds and other tribes in darkest Turkey not far from the battle front.

Following another Munich intermezzo, Scheubner-Richter graduated from the local engineering institute. In 1918 he was called to the German Army Headquarters in the Baltic countries (*Oberost*) to take charge of the press bureau in Riga. At first the position of the German units on this sector changed very little after the Russian revolution; unlike the German armies in the West, these had not been defeated in battle and their leaders were extremely reluctant to give up the conquered territories. Scheubner firmly believed in a German revival: there will be a new Germany five years hence, he told August Winnig. He was a determined opponent of the revolutionary movement; his attempts to indoctrinate the German soldiers and to fortify them against bolshevik influences through a number of newspapers (*Das neue Deutschland*) and other publications were not, however, very successful. Under the pressure of both the Red Army and the newly independent Latvians, the German units were eventually compelled to retreat and it fell to Scheubner-Richter to negotiate with Stuchka, the head of the local Red Army units.

LIKE most of his contemporaries, Scheubner-Richter had been a member of Rubonia, the Riga students corps. Under him in *Oberost* there served another member of Rubonia, Arno Schickedanz,[21] who one day drew his attention to a correspondence with a third companion of their youth—Alfred Rosenberg, an architect and painter who had shortly before settled in Munich. Rosenberg dabbled in German right-wing and

[20] In Richard Hughes *Fox in the Attic*, Natasha says about him, Poor Max-Erwin—she'd met him at parties: he'd had so much charm (p. 225).

[21] Schickedanz subsequently emerged as a nazi ideologist, closely following, in his *Der Sozialparasitismus im Voelkerleben* (1927), the theories developed by Alfred Rosenberg. According to Otto Strasser (interview, Munich, May 1962) Schickedanz quarrelled with Rosenberg in the twenties, but this did not prevent his becoming Rosenberg's right hand, first in the *Voelkischer Beobachter*, later in the administration of occupied Russian territories. He was appointed nazi governor for the Kuban and Caucasus region but never reached his destination. Together with his whole family Schickedanz committed suicide in 1945.

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Russian emigré politics and wrote to Scheubner-Richter about his negotiations with big south German firms willing to make contact with General Wrangel, then established in South Russia. The German businessmen wanted to trade with the territory under his control and, if necessary, extend economic assistance. Was not Scheubner-Richter, with his many connections and languages, the right man to visit Wrangel and to act as liaison officer with the White Armies? He went to the Balkans in 1920 but Wrangel's army was then in full retreat, and the mission was a failure. Scheubner-Richter had, however, come to know the leading personalities of the Russian emigration during the trip, especially those on its monarchist, extreme right wing. The more he thought about it, the more it appeared to him that the attempt to introduce democratic reforms in Russia had been the source of the evil; there could be only two forms of government in Russia, he wrote—Tsarism or Bolshevism: it was as easy as all that.[22] Any attempt to rule Russia through bourgeois liberals such as the Cadets, let alone the moderate socialists, was doomed to failure.

After his return to Germany Scheubner-Richter decided to continue the collaboration with the Russian right-wing extremists. There was a short Berlin interlude. In March 1920 a group of army generals and right-wing politicians attempted to overthrow the Weimar republic, and Scheubner-Richter was their candidate for heading the information service. However, by the time he reached Berlin, the Kapp putsch was over and all that remained for him was to return to Munich. He was to have been brought to trial by the Reich government for his part in the conspiracy, but the charges against him were dropped, perhaps owing to the intervention of influential friends, or because the Berlin judges realised that the Munich authorities who granted refuge to all right-wing political refugees from the north would not extradite him anyway.

From his old acquaintance Rosenberg, Scheubner-Richter heard about the existence of the small but rapidly growing National Socialist German Workers party. In October 1920 he was introduced to its leader. On 22 November he attended a meeting and soon after joined the party together with his wife. Scheubner-Richter was very favourably impressed by the suggestive power emanating from this lower-class ex-lance-corporal; soon he was to describe him as the 'prophet of *völkische* Deutschland.'[23] The admiration was mutual; Hitler gained a very favourable impression of the *grand seigneur*, who moved easily in all spheres of society. True, he was not an ideologist like Rosenberg or a deep thinker, but then he was so much more a man of character than Rosenberg, the awkward bohemian. He was not much of a public speaker—but on that score Hitler needed no help. What he badly wanted, and what only Scheubner-Richter could offer, was an eminently respectable upper-class contact man who was also a capable organiser, devoted to the movement, who could get money, and, more important still, who

[22] Leverkuehn, op. cit., p. 183.
[23] 'Die Bolschewisierung Deutschlands', in *Aufbau*, 21 September 1923.

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had useful political contacts. Later, as Führer of a mass movement, the upper-class contacts would matter little—the big bankers and industrialists would implore him to take their money. But the breakthrough from almost total obscurity to a prominent place on the national scene could not be achieved without money and contacts; in this respect Scheubner-Richter's assistance was of the very greatest importance. He was a genius at procuring funds and this at a time of economic crisis when money was not at all easy to come by in Germany. He is said to have received it from the former Bavarian monarchs, the house of Wittelsbach, as well as from one of the two pretenders to the Tsardom of Russia, Prince Kyrill of Coburg. Kyrill's wife, Victoria Feodorovna, put at Ludendorff's disposal an 'enormous sum' between 1922 and 1924 for distribution among the German right-wing extremist organisations.[24] Other notable contributors included Russian industralists (mainly oilmen) who had transferred part of their funds to Germany, such as Gukassov, Nobel, Lenissov, and others, and Baron Koeppen, General Biskupski's cousin,[25] who is said to have ruined himself by his contributions to these causes.

There were close relations between the Scheubner-Richter family and the Coburg pretenders; Scheubner-Richter's wife, Mathilde, later recalled how she went with the Archduchess Victoria, Kyrill's wife, to watch the SA, Germany's future saviours, at one of their military exercises in a Munich suburb.[26]

There were useful German contacts as well: church dignitaries, members of the Bavarian aristocracy, bankers and leaders of heavy industry such as Reusch-Haniel and Thyssen. Unlike other members of the Hitler party, Scheubner-Richter was himself a rich man and since he did not demand money for himself but for what seemed to him a worthy cause, he went about it with perfect ease and conspicuous success.

Even more important perhaps were Scheubner-Richter's political contacts, who included practically everyone prominent at that time in German right-wing politics; he was particularly close to Ludendorff and Poehner, the Munich police chief, and as a former officer he had direct access to the local Reichswehr command which followed Hitler's activities with much sympathy and occasionally gave active support. Thus the first *Reichsparteitag* in Munich (January 1923) had been held with the backing of the local Reichswehr against the strong opposition of the civilian government. Earlier, Scheubner-Richter had helped Hitler several times to evade prison on charges of conspiracy and attempted revolt. But most of his time and energy was devoted to work among the Russian exiles.

[24] 'Bericht ueber die russische monarchistische Organisation in der Emigration.' This is a detailed report, dated 18 October 1935, addressed to Himmler by General Biskupski or a member of his entourage, quoted in the following as 'Bericht'. (NSDAP Hauptarchiv—BDC.) Available on Microfilm: Washington T-175, roll 58. Biskupski was appointed spokesman for the Russian emigration in Germany in 1935.

[25] Ibid. See also Biskupski's letter to Schickedanz, 22 March 1933, in National Archives microfilm T-81, roll 16.

[26] Report of an interview with M. von Scheubner-Richter by a representative of the NSDAP main archives, dated 4 April 1936, in BDC.

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IN 1920 many Russian emigrés still refused to accept their defeat and exile as final. They hoped that the Soviet government would somehow be overthrown from within, or collapse as the result of its own incapacity, or perhaps be ejected as the result of some new foreign intervention. There was, consequently, a great deal of activity in the centres of the Russian emigration. But there was also a great deal of dissension, of personal and political strife, of mutual recrimination, not only between left, right, and centre, but also within each faction of the emigration. The emigrés accused each other of weakness and cowardice, if not outright treason, in their past and present behaviour; they quarrelled about their present foreign political orientation and the shape of the Russia that was to emerge after the successful counter-revolution.

On the extreme right wing, too, conditions in 1920 were pretty chaotic. One group had opted for Germany and preached German-Russian cooperation in the fight for a new Russia. But there were degrees of collaboration; Prince Bermont-Avalov in Berlin, for instance, was considered to be to all intents and purposes a German agent. He had raised a small army in the Baltic in 1919 to fight together with the German *Freikorps* against the bolsheviks. His enemies, who were extremely numerous, doubted both his princely origin and his military qualifications. Another group, also centred in Berlin, consisted mainly of former members or sympathisers of the *Soyuz Russkovo Naroda*, the Black Hundreds of Tsarist days, who regarded everyone slightly more liberal than themselves as a traitor to the Russian cause. But many conservatives regarded these extremists as mere scum, foreign agents or provocateurs, not much better than the bolsheviks. There were bitter disputes about their foreign political orientation; instinctively, many Russians disliked the Germans and distrusted German intentions with regard to Russia's future. How can we possibly cooperate with Ludendorff, they asked, the very man who brought Lenin to Russia in a sealed railway compartment? Eventually there were even two pretenders to the throne of the Tsar; Grand Duke Kyrill Vladimirovich, who had married a German princess, Victoria, settled in Coburg, and followed a pro-German orientation, and Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich in France, who was pro-French and had the support of the majority of the right-wing emigration.

Scheubner-Richter was the main organiser of the great monarchist congress in Bad Reichenhall in late May 1921, the most ambitious attempt to bring all Russian right-wingers together on one platform. As usual, Scheubner-Richter himself kept in the background; he welcomed the participants and the work of his Munich association was warmly commended by some of the delegates, but he left the Russians to thrash out their own problems, in the hope that they would find common ground. The Reichenhall congress was a landmark in the history of the Russian emigration, but Scheubner-Richter's high hopes were not fulfilled.

Nevertheless, he continued to give much of his time to the uphill task of trying to unite this right-wing Russian emigration into one effective political organisation that would join forces with the German right,

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in particular the Hitler movement, in the struggle for a new Russia. He founded a German-Russian politico-economic association, which set out inter alia to promote German-Russian trade (with the future Russia) and published its own newsletter. This German-Russian association, called at first The Bridge (*Die Bruecke*) became better known under the name *Aufbau* (Reconstruction). It was a right-wing popular front, an alliance of various political groups, including some eminently respectable persons such as Cramer Klett, who represented the interests of the Vatican in Bavaria. But the key positions were held by a number of trusted friends, who, as it happened, had all been members of the same student corporation back in Riga; Scheubner-Richter, von Kursell, Schickedanz—only Alfred Rosenberg was missing. Aufbau put the stress in its work on economic collaboration, but *Vorwaerts*, the German social-democratic paper, was undoubtedly right when it called this an attempt to mislead the public [27]: what economic cooperation could there possibly be so long as Aufbau declined to do any business with the Soviet government? [28] Scheubner-Richter opposed the Rapallo policy; this line would not be dangerous if the German people were led by a strong government; in the given circumstances it might be fatal.[29] He thought that the White Armies had failed because they had not been ruthless enough; they had accepted moderate socialists in their ranks instead of treating them like bolsheviks.[30] Scheubner-Richter made the Jews, and in particular the 'Elders of Zion', responsible for the dissension in the Russian emigration and advocated the adoption of the strongest measures against communists: communists should be hanged, exterminated, as in Italy [31]; he thought highly of Mussolini, who had made his opponents drink castor oil, and expressed the hope 'that the principles of Italian fascism will become self-evident in Germany too'.[32] But the German right-wingers were not militant enough for this task, and Scheubner urged them to march on Berlin 'to save German earth from the red terror'.[33] Germany's saviour he came to see in Hitler; quoting a Russian emigré paper (*Nakanune*) *Aufbau* predicted that Hitler was the only man in Germany who would achieve something in that winter of 1923. He was a clever man and had a large following among the down-and-out and the persecuted. Hitler's struggle would decide the fate not only of Germany, but of Europe, possibly of the whole world: 'This struggle will be waged under the slogan Soviet star vs. Swastika. And the Swastika will prevail'.[34]

[27] *Vorwaerts*, 9 June 1921.
[28] See, for instance, the article against 'foreign concession hunters', *Aufbau*, 25 August 1923.
[29] *Aufbau*, 21 April 1922. Exactly the same argument was used in Rosenberg's *Pest in Russland*, p. 86.
[30] *Aufbau*, 26 July 1922.
[31] Ibid., 25 August, 18 October, 21 September 1923.
[32] Ibid. 1 November 1922.
[33] Ibid. 29 September 1923.
[34] Ibid. 21 September. 25 October 1923.

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THOSE lines were written a few weeks before Hitler's first and unsuccessful bid for power. They expressed an optimism that was not altogether genuine; Scheubner-Richter could not fail to observe that his predictions about Russia had not come true; the Soviet regime had not been overthrown. In an article he wrote for the central nazi newspaper he now called on his party comrades to learn from the Russians how to act.[35]

Legend has it that Scheubner-Richter was the main organiser of the putsch of November 1923, and most historians have accepted it. He was the secretary of the 'Kampfbund', the chief organisation of all extreme right-wing organisations in Munich, and acted as liaison officer between Ludendorff and Hitler. The idea to march on Berlin was his, but the initiative was Hitler's. This, at any rate, is the gist of the evidence given many years later by his widow: in early November 1923 Scheubner-Richter was quite despondent; whenever Germany had a chance to rise again, he said, somebody committed an act of utter folly. On the eve of the putsch he went to bed early, and when Hitler telephoned and asked to see him he was reluctant to commit himself. But when Hitler came in person the old magic worked and his enthusiasm returned. Scheubner-Richter went off to take part in the meeting with Hitler, Weber, Poehner, Ludendorff and the other main figures in the attempted coup. There was agreement to act at last; in the middle of the hectic preparations he came home for a few minutes: 'Everything went smoothly, quite beyond expectations, without bloodshed. I have still a lot to do and shall not be home tonight'.[36]

The events of those twenty-four hours, from the meeting in the Hofbraeuhaus where the uneasy coalition Hitler-Kahr-Lossow was established to the march on the Feldherrnhalle, have been reconstructed in detail.[37] Scheubner-Richter, as usual, acted as liaison officer—this time between Hitler, Ludendorff and the monarchist leaders. In the fateful march to the Feldherrnhalle he walked beside Hitler, wearing his uniform of an officer of the *Chevaux legers*, spiked helmet, pincenez and all. He was one of the first to be hit by police fire; falling to the ground, he drew Hitler with him, thus perhaps saving his life.

The *putsch* collapsed within a few minutes; the masses in their enthusiasm did not sweep Hitler to power (as he had hoped), and some of his right-wing allies deserted him. The putsch led to a big trial and to Hitler's stay at Landsberg prison, where he wrote *Mein Kampf*. When he emerged from prison he had to start almost from scratch, but conditions were propitious and it did not take him long to establish the Nazi party as a powerful political instrument.

35 'Die Rote Armee', *Voelkischer Beobachter*, 23 March 1923.

36 Mathilde von Scheubner-Richter's report of 3 April 1936. Some six weeks before he had prepared a memorandum on a 'national revolution' and a coup by the nationalist forces. But it is not certain whether Hitler was decisively influenced by Scheubner-Richter's blueprint.

37 H. H. Hofmann, *Der Hitlerputsch* (Munich, 1961), passim.

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At Scheubner-Richter's funeral all the nationalist leaders who had not been arrested in the wake of the putsch were present, and many of them paid homage to the life work of the dead leader of 'Aufbau' and the *Kampfbund*.[38] They promised to carry on the good work, but without Scheubner-Richter's dynamic personality 'Aufbau' soon began to decline. It was banned for a short time by the Bavarian government but its influential backers soon had the ban revoked. Then the question of Scheubner-Richter's successor came up. General Biskupski had been in charge of the Russian department of the organisation and had followed with suspicion for a long time the doings of the Ukrainian section, headed by Butenko, an engineer, and Colonel Poltavetz-Ostranitsa, an extremist figure in Ukrainian-Cossack politics.[39] On this issue there were profound differences of opinion between the Russian right-wing extremists and their German friends, who wavered between support for a restoration on the Tsarist pattern and a division of Russia on ethnic lines, flirting with Skoropadski and other minority leaders. Ludendorff, who had the financial strings in his hands, suggested two candidates as successor to Scheubner-Richter, Arno Schickedanz and Otto von Kursell. Both were natives of Riga, and had belonged to the same students' corporation. Von Kursell was a painter; he had provided the drawings for some of the very earliest anti-Semitic pamphlets of Dietrich Eckart and Rosenberg. Less politically inclined and slightly older than Schickedanz, he was believed to be more experienced, and was chosen as Scheubner-Richter's successor. But soon there were fresh intrigues: Biskupski accused Kursell of siding with the Ukrainian separatists against the Great Russians.[40] 'Aufbau' split into a 'Russian office' headed by Biskupski, and a Ukrainian centre, led by Kursell. These two institutions ceased to exist after a few months. By late 1924 nothing remained of Scheubner's great projects; Biskupski devoted all his time to Russian emigré politics, Kursell became an academic painter, to return to politics after 1933, and Schickedanz went to work under Rosenberg at the *Voelkischer Beobachter*. Scheubner's widow continued to be a fanatical adherent of Hitler's party; for several years she worked in one office with Himmler, starting a press clipping service for the use of the Fuehrer.

Some of Scheubner's contemporaries believe that had he lived he would not have retained his place at the top of the Nazi party and the Third Reich. This is very probable; Scheubner was essentially an extreme conservative who, unlike Hitler, never ceased to believe in religion and monarchy. He lacked, in other words, the revolutionary and

38 A summary of the speeches is given in a leaflet (no title), a copy of which is to be found in the NSDAP *Hauptarchiv*.

39 Poltavetz-Ostranitsa (sic). See his *Ideologia Ukrainskovo Vilnovo Kosatstva 'Unakor'* (Munich, 1936), one of the craziest documents produced by the Ukranian, or any other, group.

40 Biskupski report to Himmler, see above. Von Kursell, in a conversation with the present writer (Munich, May 1962) said that 'Aufbau' simply faded away after Scheubner's death; he regarded the link between 'Aufbau' and the Nazi party as more or less incidental: 'It should never have been a party affair'.

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nihilistic impulse that was so prominent in the mental make-up of nazis like Hitler and Goebbels. He also had enemies in the nazi leadership; Goering, for instance, could not stand him.[41] He was an extremely useful, perhaps an indispensable, tool for Hitler in the early years, but there would hardly have been much need for him once the party had become a mass movement with supporters in all classes throughout Germany.

Ideologically, Scheubner-Richter's impact on Hitler was negligible; Rosenberg was a far greater influence during the early years, though Hitler, not a very grateful man at any time, never openly acknowledged this. Hitler, at any rate, was a quick learner; it did not need much to persuade him that his Baltic collaborators were on to a good thing with their anti-communism as far as German domestic politics were concerned. The short-lived Bavarian Soviet republic had given his compatriots a serious fright; German communist attempts to stage armed revolts elsewhere did not stand much chance of success but helped to rally support for the extreme right. In contrast to Mussolini, Hitler had never seriously studied Marxism; he was not sufficiently interested. Anti-bolshevism did not yet play a central part in nazi propaganda during its first phase. Hitler's views on Russia and communism were moulded only between 1919 and 1924, with consequences that became apparent later on.

ALFRED ROSENBERG

ALFRED ROSENBERG, the chief ideologist of National-Socialism, was also the leading party authority on things Russian. Born in the old Hanseatic city of Reval in 1893 he went (in the words of an official biographer) 'through all the sufferings of the German abroad'.[42] The predicament of the Baltic Germans after the revolution of 1905 has already been described; but all in all Rosenberg did not suffer in his childhood and adolescence much deprivation or unhappiness, private or collective. He came of a lower middle class family of uncertain racial provenance, a fact that would be of little relevance in anybody but a philosopher of race.[43] He went to the local high school and later to the Riga technical college. The writers who made the strongest cultural and political impact on him, Nietzsche and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, were the usual reading matter at the time of young middle class Germans; if the Balts as 'racial Germans' were perhaps more markedly political in their outlook, in other words more to the right, this was true of Austria too.

But the young Rosenberg who had visited Germany and France just before the outbreak of the first world war did not really think of politics

41 Interview with Otto von Kursell.

42 Thilo von Trotha's introduction to A. Rosenberg, *Blut und Ehre* (Berlin, 1939), p. 7.

43 According to a communication in Rosenberg's personal file (No. 1259) in the Berlin Document Centre, one of his grandfathers (Martin Ros) was of Lettish origin, his grandmother, *née* Sire, hailed from France, and there were also rumours of Jewish and even Mongolian antecedents.

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as his vocation; his chief interests were cultural. He wanted to be an architect and a painter; when the Riga university was moved to Moscow during the war he too settled in the Russian capital. There is nothing to show that he was particularly interested in the outcome of the war; in later years, when he had become a prominent personality on the German political scene, in the front ranks of a militarist party, his war record—or the absence of it—made him a vulnerable target for his political enemies.[44]

When the revolution of 1917 broke out in Moscow, Rosenberg was preparing, for his diploma, a design, fittingly enough, of an up-to-date crematorium with Romanesque vaults and a large colonnade as well as an adjoining graveyard. Of the historical events that were taking place around him he was hardly aware, and he recalls in his memoirs: 'If I attempted to give here a description [of the Russian revolution] and the forces involved, I'd run the risk of including knowledge which I acquired only much later through the memoirs of Russians and Englishmen (Buchanan, his daughter, and Sir Samuel Hoare)'.[45]

Rosenberg left Moscow, went to the Crimea, made his way to his native Reval, returned to Moscow for his final examinations, and again went back to Reval, which a few days later was occupied by German troops. Rosenberg thought that the combined troops of the Russian generals would eventually prevail over the unorganised Bolshevik regime: 'But what was lacking was a leader, a slogan for the future. For the return of those who had been overthrown nobody wanted to fight.'[46] Rosenberg wanted to volunteer with the German army, but was turned down as a Russian citizen in occupied territory—and because of his inability to provide any reference in Germany. It was only with some difficulty that he received in November 1918 a permit to travel to Germany with the retreating German forces.

Rosenberg entered Germany as one of a great army of Russian emigrés. True, it was a home-coming of sorts. German had been his native language and Germany a second homeland. The German revolution, in a way, hit him harder than the Russian revolution: 'I did not want to carry on my future life between the fronts . . . I wanted to go to the Reich.' 1918 was the year of Rosenberg's political awakening;

[44] See *Rote Fahne*, 30 October 1930 ('Was Rosenberg a French spy?'), based on Carbuccia's fascist paper *Je suis partout* which claimed to have discovered incriminatory material in the French foreign ministry; see also *8 Uhr Abendblatt*, 28 October 1930; *Berliner Volkszeitung*, 30 October 1930; *Vorwaerts*, 14 November 1931. Goering is said to have asked Hanfstaengl: 'Where did the scoundrel spend world war one?' (O. Strasser's *National-Sozialist*, 10 August 1930). Rosenberg won a lawsuit against the social-democrats following a similar allegation (*Voelkischer Beobachter*, 29 June 1932). Rosenberg, of course, was not a French spy, but Chancellor Brüning was substantially right when he said about Rosenberg in the Reichstag that 'this man had not yet discovered which was his real fatherland when I was fighting in the war to the last breath.' Rosenberg's somewhat lame answer appeared the following day in the *Voelkischer Beobachter* (26 February 1932).

[45] *Memoirs of Alfred Rosenberg*, ed. Serge Lang and Ernst von Schenck (New York, 1949), p. 20.

[46] Ibid. p. 24.

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in 1919 and 1920 he laid the ideological foundations of his new political philosophy. By 1923 he had already published seven books and booklets and countless articles. It was very rapid progress by any standards.

ACCORDING to an official biography Rosenberg came to Germany in 1918 in order to enlighten the Germans about the Russian revolution and about communism; but first he had to enlighten himself. He knew that he disliked what was happening in Russia, but would not have found it easy to explain why. The political education of Alfred Rosenberg can be followed with some accuracy from his diaries, parts of which appeared in the last phase of the third Reich.

At the time of the 1917 revolution he was preoccupied with Schopenhauer and Wagner, Renaissance art and Indian philosophy. He developed in some detail his thoughts about 'Nirvana and personality', and wrote a draft for a book on the 'Philosophy of German Art' (which eventually became *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*). Around him the old world was dying and a new world being born, but the young architect from Reval does not seem to have reacted strongly one way or the other. True, there were some unfavourable comments on the Jews: 'this people hates everything that is not like itself, therefore there ought to be no tolerance towards it', and on the Russians: 'I am interested in the juxtaposition of the Russian and the German', Rosenberg wrote— and found moral weakness and lack of character in the Russian.[47] But these were the usual prejudices of the Balts or the *Russkie Nemtsy*, which long before had found classic expression in a book by one of Rosenberg's compatriots, Victor Hehn, *De moribus Ruthenorum*. The Russian was false, idle, unable to make a sustained effort; he was artistically gifted but morally unstable.

Rosenberg's attitude to the revolution of March 1917 was one of qualified enthusiasm; on one occasion he called it a deed of unheard of grandeur.[48] Everywhere he noted the conscious and serious attitude of all sections of the population. Fifteen months later he had become a fanatical anti-semite and a rabid anti-socialist; politics had suddenly superseded arts in his attention. He continued to write essays on 'personality', but they dealt exclusively with the 'idea of exploitation and destruction', the Jewish idea. He accused the Jews of trying to cause popular chaos by their smooth talk about human rights. Almost all left-wing socialists were Jews: 'Travelling through Russia, in spas and elsewhere, I saw Jewish students with *Pravda* in their hands lecturing in military hospitals.' Behind all these attempts at social and political destruction there was always the Jew.[49]

47 'Nirwana und Persoenlichkeit', in *Schriften und Reden*, vol. 1; *Schriften aus den Jahren 1917–1921* (Munich, 1943), pp. 12, 16, 20.

48 *Schriften und Reden*, vol. 1, p. 71. His impressions of the March revolution were written in Russian.

49 Ibid. p. 77.

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His thesis was not original—even some of the slogans such as *Voelkerchaos* were taken from H. S. Chamberlain. Some of it is ill-digested Nietzsche; for instance, the references to the stupidity of an ignorant mass. Some is a typical romantic rejection of the industrial age: the activity of the industrial worker is said to be absolutely senseless, whereas the work of the peasant is purposeful and clear. *Pest in Russia* opens with a quotation from Goethe in which the Weimar sage expressed his fears about the prevailing use of machines; '*es waelzt sich heran wie ein Gewitter*. . . .' This quotation, embodying the reaction of an 'artistic soul' against the 'soulless machine age', first occurs in an unpublished essay ('The Jew', written in Reval or Moscow in July 1918), which already includes most of Rosenberg's ideas about Jewry and Bolshevism on which his later books were based.

ROSENBERG'S sudden conversion in 1918, his transformation from a slightly eccentric and not very original art critic and philosopher into a political thinker, appears in perspective a matter of some puzzlement. For those who did not live through that stormy period it is difficult to realise what passions were roused during the revolution. It is equally difficult to understand the psychology of those who believe they have discovered the hidden forces behind current events. There has been a strong inclination throughout history to look for a hidden hand whenever the suddenness or enormity of events transcends the comprehension of those who witness them. The French revolution was one such occasion, the Russian revolution another. Painstaking research into their political, social, and economic pre-history, and into the ideological developments in the decades preceding the revolution, the analysis of the political forces involved, rarely yielded clear and satisfactory answers, whereas the conspiratorial theory, relentlessly pursued, appealed to many contemporaries who had neither the patience nor the intellectual capacity for more serious investigation. For Rosenberg, the artist, any such politico-social analysis was ruled out from the beginning; he was uninterested in economics and knew nothing of the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia, of socialism, Marxism, or other left-wing doctrines. He did know, somewhat vaguely, from his study of H. S. Chamberlain and the Black Hundred pamphlets, that the Jew was evil and was responsible for much of the world's misfortune. The Black Hundred had developed the concept of *Zhidomasonstvo*, combining various sinister influences in one all-purpose slogan; Rosenberg, because of his ethnic origin and cultural background, was able to link these ideas with the German racial doctrines. Having gained the key to the understanding of the revolution, he had no further interest in describing or analysing in detail what was wrong with revolutionary Russia, socialism, or communism; for him it was enough to show that Trotsky's original name was Bronstein, that Steklov's name was Nachamkes, and Kamenev's Rosenblum, that Kerensky was really Kirbis (*sic*), and that (according to Mommsen) on one day the Jews had killed 120,000 people

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in Cyprus. A serious confrontation with the Russian revolution on this basis was impossible, but this was not what Rosenberg wanted. As he put it many years later: You cannot wage a big war in world history with a chance of lasting success if you accept the ideology and world outlook of the enemy as the framework of the battleground. Consequently, only a very few of Rosenberg's many writings on Russia really deal with the subject under discussion. He is always preoccupied with quotations from the Talmud, the Zionist movement, or the impact of freemasons on the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Rosenberg spent many hours in the Munich state library to find yet another fitting quotation from the *Shkuhan Aruch*, to 'unmask' yet another Jew in 19th-century France or England who had adopted a gentile name. For all we know the Russian expert of national-socialism did not read a single book, a single article by Marx or Engels.[50] His only fare on things Russian were the newspapers of the extreme right-wing emigrés such as *Novoe Vremya*, *Dvuglavyi Oryol*, or *Prizyv*, which he used extensively in his own work.

Of pre-revolutionary Russia he knew, of course, more than the other nazi leaders. He was taught Russian in school and had a very good knowledge of the language. He was well read in classical Russian literature, and in his early writings often quoted Dostoevski and, to a lesser extent, Tolstoy. In one of his early books he enumerates some important Russian novels and says that only by reading them and by studying Russian folk songs and ikons can the outsider get a glimpse into the Russian soul.[51] Whether Rosenberg himself read all these books is not readily obvious; they cannot really have appealed to him, otherwise they would have had a more lasting effect on his views on Russia. In the early years he was sometimes willing to give Russia the benefit of the doubt, as, for instance, when he maintained that Russian Orthodoxy compared favourably with both the Catholic Church and freemasonry. In later years, however, his attitude hardened; there were few references to Russian cultural achievements but much abuse of Russian formlessness, lack of creativity, depotism, and servitude. In the *Mythos* he wrote that it had been a mistake to compel Russia to europeanise itself; in future Russia should see its centre of gravity in Asia; only then would it regain its inner balance; in Asia it had a mission to fulfil, not so in Europe.[52]

ROSENBERG had arrived in Munich in January 1919. He turned for help to the Russian emigrés committee which provided a room and vouchers for food. Most of his time he spent in the state library, reading up on Jewish history, the history of the Jesuits, the masonic orders, and similar topics. Through a fellow Baltic refugee, Mrs. Von Schrenck, he met Dietrich Eckart, a German writer and playwright, who was about to publish a magazine devoted to anti-semitic and anti-communist propaganda. Rosenberg has described his first meetings with

50 The only work by Lenin he ever quoted was *State and Revolution*.
51 'Das Verbrechen der Freimaurerei', in *Schriften und Reden*, vol. 1, p. 585.
52 *Mythos des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* (edition of 1930), p. 601.

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this patron saint of national-socialism, who accepted him as a 'co-warrior against Jerusalem'.[53]

Eckart, who was also a poet of sorts, is now chiefly remembered for his translation into German of *Peer Gynt*. A heavy-set man who somewhat resembled another early nazi leader, Julius Streicher, he was a bona fide anti-Marxist and anti-semite, a heavy drinker who, from time to time, had to submit to cures in closed institutions. But Eckart, the bohemian, could not quite share Rosenberg's fanaticism and deadly seriousness, his utter lack of humour. Rosenberg wrote about Eckart that 'there always came, after days of full energy, these pauses during which he retreated into himself, simply refusing to consider outward occurrences important enough. . . . Since Eckart was incapable of any sustained effort, I had taken care of all routine work from the very beginning and relieved him of most of his duties' (as editor of the *Voelkischer Beobachter*[54]). When the *Voelkischer Beobachter* was made a daily paper in March 1923, Rosenberg became editor. According to his version, Eckart no longer bothered to show up at the editorial department, and Hitler had told him (Rosenberg) that if he did all the work he might as well get the credit for it. Rosenberg had become a German citizen and thought he could now abandon his previous caution not to appear in the limelight of German domestic politics. Eckart is said to have taken the appointment badly; Rosenberg himself reports that he was accused by his former mentor of ingratitude and that 'some resentment remained'.[55] Rosenberg's first published article was on 'Jewish Bolshevism', his first contribution to the *Voelkischer Beobachter* dealt with Zionism, to be followed by a series on the 'evils of free-masonry'. These remained the central topics in his writings throughout the early twenties. It may not be readily obvious why Zionism had to be brought in; only a few years before Rosenberg had expressed himself in favour of a Jewish state.[56] If he had now become anti-Zionist, it was mainly because he had become convinced that the Jewish national movement was merely a cloak for Jewish plans for world domination: 'The Weizmanns, Rothschilds, Warburgs, Schiffs, threaten us quite openly with world revolution, with bolshevism, if they do not receive Palestine'. It was one of his main contentions that bolshevism was not an aim in itself, but simply a means employed by Jewish finance capital to uproot the existing order, to destroy the national economies, to demoralise the peoples—and then to acquire the remainder for a song.[57]

Not many of his contemporaries in Germany shared his opinions; even on the extreme right there was pressure for a reconciliation with bolshevist Russia. Rosenberg regarded it as one of his main tasks to call his compatriots to 'remain firm against the temptations from the East';

[53] *Dietrich Eckart: Ein Vermaechtnis* (Munich, 1935), p. 45.
[54] *Memoirs of Alfred Rosenberg*, pp. 48, 62.
[55] Ibid. pp. 70–71.
[56] *Schriften und Reden*, vol. 1, p. 79 (written in June 1918).
[57] *Voelkischer Beobachter*, 17, 24 July, 4, 21 August, 26 November 1921.

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he was particularly scathing about Radek's success in winning over German nationalist newspapers.[58] He strongly opposed the campaign to help the starving millions in Soviet Russia; the German workers stinted themselves of food in the belief that they were helping their Russian comrades, but most of this money was spent in Berlin and Stockholm luxury restaurants.[59] He had second thoughts about what ought to have been done in 1918: Moscow should have been taken by the advancing German army; the annexationist peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk had not been far-reaching enough.[60]

Much of his material he drew from the extreme right-wing Russian emigré press, which he scanned regularly for comments friendly to the young nazi movement. He evidently liked the reference in one such paper to the 'socialism of the future from Peter I to Adolf Hitler', remarked approvingly on the fact that another Russian language periodical used the swastika on its cover, and quoted from a third the hope that Russia too would one day be able to boast of a Hitler movement.[61] During all those years there was only one modest attempt to discuss communist ideology; in this Rosenberg tried to demonstrate at some length why Marxism was wrong. But the temptation to give the 'Jewish character of Marxism' as an explanation was too strong to be resisted, and with this rational discussion ended.[62]

BETWEEN 1919 and 1923 Rosenberg wrote and published no fewer than seven books, translated another,[63] and kept up a constant flow of articles. Some of the books were slight, all were repetitive; but it was a considerable physical effort. Almost at once he became both the chief ideologist and the chief propagandist of the Nazi party; apart from the splenetic efforts of Dietrich Eckart and Feder's economic tract, his writings were the only ideological propaganda material of the Nazi party; *Mein Kampf* was published much later, and Goebbels was not yet even a member of the party. It is not difficult to imagine the impact these long pamphlets had on the party during its early, formative period. Moreover, Rosenberg the pamphleteer was far more intelligible than the philosopher of later years; the *Mythos* was widely sold but apparently was not read by a single leading figure in the Third Reich, not even Hitler.

At first glance the long pamphlets give the impression of immense erudition. When writing on the amorality of the Talmud, Rosenberg

58 'Schicksalswende in London', *Voelkischer Beobachter*, 6 March 1921; 'Genua', ibid. 19 April 1922.
59 'Vernichtung und Verhoehnung deutscher Arbeiter', ibid. 29 March 1922.
60 'Von Brest Litowsk nach Versailles', ibid. 8 May 1921.
61 *Voelkischer Beobachter*, 7 April 1923, 5 October 1921, quoting *Russkaia Tribuna* (Zürich), *Ukrainski Kazak* (Lvov), and *Novoe Vremya* (Belgrade), respectively.
62 'Erkenntniskritik und Marxismus', *Voelkischer Beobachter*, 12 July 1922.
63 These were *Unmoral im Talmud* and *Die Spur des Juden im Wandel der Zeiten* (1920); *Das Verbrechen der Freimaurerei* (1921); *Pest in Russland* and *Der Staatsfeindliche Zionismus* (1922); *Wesen, Grundsaetze, und Ziele der NSDAP* and *Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion* (1923). Rosenberg translated Gougenot des Mousseaux, *Le Juif*.

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quotes the 'Baba Meziah and Baba Kamma' as if he were a rabbi and son of a rabbi. When describing the crimes of freemasonry, references such as *Rivista della Massoneria Italiana*, 1881, and *Le Globe*, Paris, 25 November 1830, are not infrequent. Elsewhere he refers to such sources as Beaulieu's *Histoire de Commerce de Lyon* (1838), André Favin's *Histoire de Navarre* (1612), the *Analecta Ecclesiastica* and the *Masonic Chronicle of Chicago*. (The only book in which learned references are conspicuously absent is his *Pest in Russia*.) Rosenberg had of course not read all these books in the Munich library; he was a man in a hurry, and since any single one of the subjects he touched (for instance, the Talmud) would have required a lifetime of study, he relied on a dozen standard works in each field. He did not study the Talmud (he did not know a word of Hebrew or Yiddish), his quotations are taken from standard works such as Rohling and Eisenmenger, which had long been in wide use.[64] He did not consult the many volumes of the 'Archives Israelites', but found the references in Gougenot des Mousseaux's book. He was simply a propagandist who collected quotations and references, strung them together, and presented them in an up-to-date framework. Apparently there was a demand for such literature; in a country with a traditional weakness for footnotes this pseudo-scholarship created an impression of original research not only on the uneducated but also on considerable sections of what is in Germany frequently called the educated middle class. The great number of pseudo-learned references is of course typical of the proponents of the conspiracy theory of history; in this respect Rosenberg did not differ from the Nesta Websters, the Schwarz-Bostunichs, and the others, before and since. After all, they had little straw with which to make their bricks; the more unlikely their assertions, the more quotations were needed.

Up to 1923 Rosenberg refrained from taking an active part in German politics. In his writings, however, there was no such reticence, and it is somewhat strange to read the ever-recurring tirades against the strangers from Russia who had invaded Germany after the first world war and wanted to dominate German politics. Rosenberg chose to forget that he too was a Russian refugee. His views on Russia are summarised in *Pest in Russia*, published with 75 photographs in 1922. Its main thesis is that the clash between communism and capitalism is mere make-believe. Trotsky knows that financial capitalism is not his real enemy—at most it was a competitor. The real significance of the Russian revolution is the attempt of the Near Eastern racial underworld to overthrow Europe ('Der Aufmarsch des vorderasiatischen Geistes gegen Europa'); as such it is compared with the campaigns of Muslims, Tatars, Huns, and other conquerors in ancient times and the Middle Ages. The Jews take the most prominent place in this demonology; they are assisted by the Armenians, the Chinese, the Latvians (against whom Rosenberg seems to have nursed a private grudge), and even the Tungus.

[64] August Rohling, *Der Talmudjude* (1871); Johann Andreas Eisenmenger, *Entdectes Judentum* (1711).

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Up to this point Rosenberg agreed with his friends of the extreme right-wing Russian emigration who also argued that the Russian revolution was the work of foreigners. But he went further than they did in pointing to what he thought were the fatal weaknesses in the Russian character: indolence, ignorance, the chaotic anarchistic streak in many Russians, the stupidity and the impertinence of the semi-intelligentsia. All this Rosenberg explained as the result of the racial bastardisation of Russia under the Tatars, the 'fatal blood mixture'; the European and Asian characters are in permanent combat, the outcome of which cannot be predicted. As a result, Russia was even less able than Germany to resist the poison.

Such ideas about the racial inferiority of the Russians and the Slavs in general, were not exactly novel; they had been widely held among the Russian Germans long before the revolution in 1917. Nor were they entirely absent in Germany, although there was also the traditional Russophilia of the right, and, after the first world war, the various national-bolshevik schools. Rosenberg regarded it as one of his main tasks to purge national-socialism of these deviations and it was due to him that nazi policy from the very beginning rejected the very idea of an ideological confrontation or a political compromise.

This attitude gradually made his collaboration with the Russian emigration more and more difficult. The Russians, however right-wing, did not enjoy being told that they were racially inferior, nor were they pleased when Rosenberg developed his ideas about the division of the future Russia on ethnic lines. Up to 1923, while *Aufbau* existed, cooperation continued; there was, after all, the over-riding common interest in fighting the Soviet regime. But after the Hitler *putsch*, the situation rapidly changed. The Soviets were now firmly in the saddle. Rosenberg was now deeply involved in German politics. While Hitler was in prison he was to lead the nazi movement. He retained a few fellow emigrés who collaborated with him in *Weltkampf* (an anti-semitic news service), but most of these were Russian Germans, Ukrainians, or belonged to other minorities. With the real Russians Rosenberg lost contact; he had antagonised most of them by what they considered his anti-Russian rather than anti-bolshevik programme. In addition, he lost much of his interest in Russia as Rosenberg the pamphleteer gave way to Rosenberg the philosopher of history and cultural critic; he was now working on his magnum opus, the *Mythos*.

Rosenberg was basically a simple soul, a true believer. In many respects he resembled those 'foolhardy Russian semi-intellectuals' whom he attacked so often. Unlike Goebbels, he was not a cynic, but really believed in his own propaganda; he reduced a very complex phenomenon like the Russian revolution to a simple false thesis which prevented him from ever beginning to understand what it was all about. An innate and apparently total lack of humour prevented him from realising how grotesque his own historical and political constructions really were.

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Hitler soon became aware that Rosenberg was at best a heavy-going, plodding ideologist of doubtful value to the party. Hence Rosenberg's gradual decline after 1930, but this does not in retrospect diminish his importance as an authority on Russia and communism during the early formative years of the nazi movement.

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THE REICHSWEHR AND THE RED ARMY, 1920–1933

F. L. Carsten

SINCE the end of the second world war, and even earlier, a good deal has been written on the secret understanding that existed between the leaders of the German and the Russian armies in the days of the Weimar Republic. Yet much of this writing has been highly sensational, inaccurate in detail, or serving specific political purposes. A re-examination of the evidence available in German archives should make it possible to establish the facts and to obtain a more accurate picture than has been available hitherto. Much of the evidence comes from the papers left by General Hans von Seeckt, who was Chief of the Army Command from March 1920 until October 1926; he was, undoubtedly, the initiator and guiding spirit of the pro-Soviet policy adopted by the German army, as he was of so many other political plans in Weimar Germany. General von Seeckt was a 'political general' in the proper sense of the term, not only highly interested in politics, but always busy with political schemes of one kind or another, negotiating with German and foreign politicians, aiming at the highest dignity of the Republic, the Presidency, for himself, and becoming a member of the *Reichstag* after his dismissal from the army. Unfortunately, however, the key piece of the evidence is now missing from the Seeckt papers [1]: the diary kept throughout those years by Seeckt's aide and right-hand man, Colonel (later General) Otto Hasse,[2] who in 1922 became the Chief of the *Truppenamt*, two years after Seeckt's appointment as Chief of the Army Command. It was the Chief of the *Truppenamt*, the secret General Staff, who was responsible for the negotiations and contacts with the Russians, the key figure in the German Ministry of Defence; hence the loss of the Hasse diary is extremely serious. Fortunately, however, there are preserved among the Seeckt papers the notes made by another general, perhaps General von Rabenau, but more likely Lieutenant-General Lieber, in about 1939

[1] The Seeckt papers are now kept at the Militärgeschichtliche Forschungsamt at Freiburg im Breisgau. I am indebted to Colonel Dr Meier-Welcker, the director of the Forschungsamt, for permission to use the Seeckt papers and other documents there. I should also like to express my thanks to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for permission to use the documents quoted below, pp. 127–131.

[2] Otto Hasse is the general who is called General Paul Hasse by George W. F. Hallgarten, 'General Hans von Seeckt and Russia', *The Journal of Modern History*, xxi, 1949, p. 30; General von Hasse by Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army* (Oxford, 1955), p. 410, and by E. H. Carr, *German-Soviet Relations between the Two World Wars, 1919–1939* (Baltimore, 1951), p. 58, and *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, iii (London, 1953), p. 364; and, even more strangely, Ludwig Haase (*sic*) by John W. Wheeler-Bennett, *The Nemesis of Power—The German Army in Politics, 1918–1945* (London, 1954), pp. 127, 129, 131. Otto Hasse was of far greater importance for the history of the Reichswehr than Paul or Ernst Hasse, the one his brother, the other his cousin, and all commoners.

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from the Hasse diary; and from these notes it is possible to follow in detail the initial negotiations between German officers and Soviet representatives.[3]

The earliest reference to a positive policy towards Soviet Russia which I have been able to find among the Seeckt papers is a letter written to General von Massow on 31 January 1920, while Seeckt was still Chief of the *Truppenamt*: the unchangeable aim of German policy, in Seeckt's opinion, was to bring about a political and economic agreement with 'Great Russia'; therefore the future masters of Russia must not be the enemies of Germany; thus attention must be focused on red Russia, victorious over Denikin and Kolchak; from this it followed that Germany had to side against Poland and the Baltic states: he was opposed to the support of Poland against Bolshevism, and Russia should not be prevented from regaining her former Imperial frontiers.[4] How busy Seeckt was at that time with the problem of German-Russian relations emerges from a manuscript written only five days after the letter to General von Massow; there he outlined the principles to which he was to adhere for many years to come:

> Only in firm cooperation with a Great Russia does Germany have a chance of regaining her position as a world power. In place of lengthy proofs for the correctness of this fundamental thesis of German policy only one will be adduced here: England and France fear the combination of the two land powers and attempt to prevent it with all their means—hence we have to seek it with all our strength. . . . It is quite immaterial whether we like or dislike the new Russia and its internal structure. Our policy would have had to be the same vis-à-vis a Tsarist Russia or a state under Kolchak or Denikin. Now we have to come to terms with Soviet Russia—we have no alternative. One thing this has in common with the old Imperial Russia and the Russia desired by the generals: the overpowering demand for the unity of the Empire, for Great Russia. This, however, is exactly what we need, a united strong Empire with a broad frontier towards us. Therewith stands condemned the always mistaken policy of creating buffer states. If we disregard earlier times, when it was wrongly held that our eastern neighbour could be rendered harmless through demolition, blasting, and partition, now everybody's eyes should be opened to the fact that the sole purpose of creating Poland, Lithuania, Latvia was to erect a wall to separate Germany from Russia. . . . Now France trembles for her Poland against which rises a strengthened Russia threatening

[3] Although two American historians—George W. F. Hallgarten, loc. cit. p. 28ff., and Harold J. Gordon, *The Reichswehr and the German Republic, 1919–1926* (Princeton, 1957), *passim*, quote from the Hasse diary, it appears that what they have used is not the diary, but the notes made from it later by another general. This may have been Seeckt's biographer, General Friedrich von Rabenau, as Professor Gordon thinks (op. cit., pp. 357–58); but one of the envelopes in which these notes were kept contains a pencilled note that they were compiled by Lieutenant-General Lieber. In any case, these notes seem to be all that is left of the Hasse diary. Cf. Rabenau, *Seeckt—Aus seinem Leben, 1918–1936*, Leipzig, 1940, p. 11, n. 1.

[4] Nachlass Seeckt, box 19, no. 278, p. 13: notes entitled 'Seeckt als Chef des Truppenamts Oktober 1919 bis Mai 1920'.

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> destruction, and now Germany is to become the saviour of her mortal enemy! Her mortal enemy, for we have none more deadly at this moment. Never will Prussia-Germany rest content with Bromberg, Graudenz, Thorn, (Marienburg), Posen in Polish hands, and like a divine miracle there now appears on the horizon help for us in our deep distress. At this juncture nobody should ask Germany to lift as much as a finger when doom engulfs Poland. With such help we would only play the game of France, who will be largely lost when Poland is destroyed. . . .[5]

THROUGHOUT the years it was the common anti-Polish denominator, rather than secret German rearmament with Russia's help, which made General von Seeckt such a firm protagonist of the Russian alliance. Furthermore, it was not the existence of the Polish Corridor, as has often been thought, but the existence of Poland as such to which General von Seeckt objected. As he wrote in September 1922 in an official memorandum on 'Germany's Attitude towards the Russian Problem' for the German Chancellor:

> Poland's existence is intolerable, incompatible with the survival of Germany. It must disappear and it will disappear through its own internal weakness and through Russia—with our assistance. For Russia Poland is even more intolerable than for us; no Russia can reach agreement with Poland. With Poland will disappear one of the strongest pillars of the Versailles settlement, the preponderance of France. . . . Poland can never offer any advantages to Germany, either economically because it is incapable of any development, or politically because it is a vassal of France. The re-establishment of the broad common frontier between Russia and Germany is the precondition of the regaining of strength of both countries. Russia and Germany within the frontiers of 1914! This should be the basis of reaching an understanding between the two. . . .[6]

And more than two years later, in January 1925, Seeckt again explained, this time to the Russian ambassador, Krestinsky, and two other Russian officials, that the basis of Germany's foreign policy was to lean upon Russia because it was impossible for Germany to lean either on France or Britain, and that the goal in the east was to regain the frontiers of 1914! When his somewhat suspicious Russian listeners enquired whether

[5] Nachlass Seeckt, box 15, no. 212: manuscript of Seeckt with the title 'Deutschland und Russland', dated 4 February [1920]. By 'the always mistaken policy of creating buffer states' (*stets falsche Randstaatenpolitik*) and that of 'demolition, blasting and partition' (*Zertrümmerung, Absprengung und Teilung*) pursued in 'earlier times', Seeckt clearly referred to the political strategy of the German Imperial government during the first world war.

[6] Nachlass Seeckt, box 15, no. 213: Seeckt's reply to a Promemoria of Count Brockdorff-Rantzau on Germany's eastern policy of 15 August 1922, dated 11 September 1922; printed with several omissions and errors by Julius Epstein in *Der Monat*, no. 2, November 1948, under the title 'Der Seeckt-Plan—Aus unveröffentlichten Dokumenten'. Most of this document had already been published by von Rabenau, *Seeckt—Aus seinem Leben, 1918–1936*, pp. 315–18. At that time—after the campaign against Poland and before the war against Russia—Seeckt's policy seemed to coincide with that of Hitler.

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Germany would not be willing, if certain advantages were offered to her, to combine with Britain against Russia, he reiterated that Germany could not possibly go against Russia.[7]

During 1920, however, no rapprochement between the German army and the Russians seems to have taken place, and no German aid was rendered to the Red Army during its advance into Poland. On the Russian side, revolutionary hopes were running so high during the Polish campaign that there seemed little need to make concessions to German territorial demands or to recognise the frontiers of 1914, although some officers and commissars of the Red Army declared their willingness to restore West Prussia to the German fatherland.[8] A few days after the Russian defeat before Warsaw in August 1920, however, an old friend of Seeckt, the former Young Turk leader and minister of war Enver Pasha, who had found refuge in Moscow, from there wrote to the German general a curious letter in very bad German: 'Yesterday [i.e. on 25 August] I had a talk with Sklanski [*sic*, meaning Sklyansky, Deputy People's Commissar for War], the deputy and right-hand man of Trotsky. . . . A party here, which has real power and to which Trotsky too belongs, is in favour of a rapprochement with Germany. Sklanski said: this party would be willing to recognise the old German frontier of 1914. And they see only one way out of the world's chaos: cooperation with Germany and Turkey. In order to strengthen this party's position and to win the whole Soviet government for the cause, whether it would not be possible to give some unofficial help, for example, reports about the Polish army, and if possible to have arms sold and smuggled. . . .'[9] This letter was taken to Berlin by a personal courier who was empowered to speak to Seeckt or one of his representatives; but unfortunately we do not know whether such an interview took place and, if so, what resulted from it.[10]

[7] Nachlass Seeckt, box 7, no. 52: diary notes of Seeckt about a conversation in the Russian embassy on 15 January 1925 with Krestinsky, Stomoniakov, and Rozengolts, an official of the Russian War Commissariat and chief of the central board of the Red Air Force. 'Ich entwickele die Richtlinien für deutsche Politik. Anlehnung weder an Frankreich noch an England möglich. Daher an Russland. . . . Im Osten Ziel: Grenze von 1914! . . . Frage: wird D. gegen Vorteile mit England gegen Russland gehen? Lage schwer denkbar, da dann England auch gegen Frankreich, also Frankreich und Russland zusammen. D. kann nicht gegen Russland. . . .'

[8] This story of a meeting at Soldau in East Prussia which was addressed by officers and commissars of the Red Army was told by Martov at the German Independent Socialist congress at Halle in October 1920: *USPD. Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des ausserordentlichen Parteitages in Halle* (Berlin, n.d.), pp. 212–13. In general see E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, iii. pp. 327–28. According to Herbert Helbig, *Die Träger der Rapallo-Politik* (Göttingen, 1958), p. 42, the Red Army had formed local Soviets in the two East Prussian towns of Soldau and Strasburg which it had occupied during its advance into Poland.

[9] Nachlass Seeckt, box 15, no. 202 f: letter signed 'Ali' and dated Moscow, 26 August 1920. The letter is printed very incompletely and with the omission of the name of Sklanski by von Rabenau, op. cit., p. 307, and from there translated into English by E. H. Carr, op. cit., p. 328. My own translation is from the original.

[10] Enver's letter seems misinterpreted by Hallgarten, loc. cit., p. 30, who says: 'in a conference between Enver and Russian military leaders (*sic*) of the then all-important Trotsky circle . . . the Russians expressed their preparedness to come to terms with the Germans and to recognise the old German frontier of 1914, on condition that Germany would furnish Enver's Turkey with weapons . . .'. The words 'Die Nachrichten

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INDEED, we possess very little information about what happened during the following twelve months, from September 1920 to August 1921, and what little we know does not come from German sources. It seems that General von Seeckt at first left the initiative to German armament firms to circumvent the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles through the establishment of branches in Soviet Russia. On 7 April 1921 Victor Kopp, the semi-official Soviet representative in Berlin and an old associate of Trotsky, reported to him—referring to 'what we said in Moscow'—that he was negotiating with Krupp's about the manufacture of guns and shells, with the Albatrosswerke about the building of aeroplanes, and with Blohm and Voss about the construction of submarines on Russian soil; he suggested that a German technical mission, headed by 'Neumann who is known to you', should proceed to Moscow to discuss details; Kopp's report, now in the Trotsky archives, contains manuscript notes by Lenin expressing his approval.[11] The proposed German mission duly visited Russia in the early summer of 1921; it was headed by Major Oskar Ritter von Niedermayer, a close associate of Seeckt's, the 'Neumann' of Kopp's report, who for many years was to play a leading part in German-Russian military relations, and included several other German officers to whom the same applied. Within the *Truppenamt* a '*Sondergruppe R*' was founded, which was to be responsible for the secret contacts with Russia and for the supervision of the German armament firms engaged on Russian contracts.[12]

Yet little that was definite seems to have been accomplished during the first nine months of 1921; it was only when the negotiations were transferred to Berlin, in September, that progress became more marked.[13] There Krasin, the Chairman of the Council for Foreign Trade, and Kopp started strictly secret discussions with Colonel Hasse and other German officers which were held in private apartments, usually in that of Major Kurt von Schleicher, a few minutes distant from the Ministry of Defence. There the foundation of a German firm, named 'Gesellschaft zur Förderung gewerblicher Unternehmungen', or 'Gefu' for short, was discussed, which was to be responsible for the manufacture of arms by German firms in Russia and for their sale; the Germans were in favour

über die Polnische Armee' (omitted by von Rabenau) alone show that German help was to be rendered not to the Turks, but to the Russians. As we do not know what Seeckt's reactions were, too much importance should not be attached to Enver's letter.

11 E. H. Carr, op. cit., p. 362 and n. 1; *German-Soviet Relations between the two World Wars*, p. 57.

12 E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, iii, 363; *German-Soviet Relations between the two World Wars*, pp. 57–58; G. Hilger and A. G. Meyer, *The Incompatible Allies* (New York, 1953), p. 194; report of Major Fritz Tschunke to von Rabenau of 13 February 1939, printed by J. Epstein in *Der Monat*, no. 2, November 1948, pp. 48–49. As Tschunke wrote many years after the events his dating is very imprecise, and this has affected the later literature on the subject.

13 According to Hans W. Gatzke, 'Russo-German military collaboration during the Weimar Republic', *American Historical Review*, lxiii, 1958, p. 567, 'in the spring of that year conversations were begun between members of the Reichswehr (. . .) and Russian representatives'; but he does not quote any evidence for this statement.

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of starting with the manufacture of aeroplanes. When Hasse on 2 October reported to Seeckt who was on leave at Kissingen, his attitude was hesitant and reserved; but later he gave permission for more officers to be informed and for contacts to be established with Junkers and Stinnes. He also informed the German Chancellor, Joseph Wirth, who was at the same time the Minister of Finance, and whose cooperation was therefore essential, but not President Ebert, the Supreme Commander of the army. Seeckt clearly would have preferred to remain in the background, but the Russians insisted on speaking to him personally. This conversation took place on 8 December, again in a private apartment, but Seeckt was unable to provide the financial guarantees desired by the Russians. After lengthy negotiations the Reich government provided 150 million marks which were paid over to Colonel Hasse.

In addition, the Russians desired German support for an attack upon Poland, but this was opposed by Seeckt, who considered that it would involve Germany in a war with France and Czechoslovakia: he recommended to Wirth an attitude of benevolent neutrality. To promote these Russian plans, Radek arrived from Moscow accompanied by von Niedermayer and demanded to see Seeckt on 17 January 1922. Again Seeckt decided on negotiating through a subordinate officer, Major Fischer, and only received Radek on 10 February.[14] Radek submitted to the Germans proposals for the revival of the Russian armaments industry through German help, for consultations between the two general staffs about military plans, for the use of German military literature and instructions for the training of the Russian officer corps; he complained that Germany relied too much on Britain, while Seeckt emphasised that Britain alone could curb French ambitions, hence Germany had to cooperate with her.[15]

As Russia—according to Radek—intended to attack Poland in the spring of 1922, the Russians badly needed aeroplanes, and by the end of April Junkers were able to start production in Russia, while the Albatrosswerke were prepared to do the same. Chicherin, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, at the beginning of April approached Chancellor Wirth to obtain the seconding of German officers for work in Russia, and later in the same month once more broached the subject of the restitution of the frontiers of 1914. That was at the time of the negotiations which led to the conclusion of the Treaty of Rapallo. This was warmly welcomed by Seeckt because it constituted the first attempt on Germany's side to return to an active foreign policy, the first recovery of Germany's prestige in the world. On 31 May Seeckt saw Wirth and

[14] Not 'in December 1921', as stated by Gordon, *The Reichswehr and the German Republic, 1919–1926*, p. 345.

[15] Nachlass Seeckt, box 19, no. 278, pp. 38, 50–51: notes entitled: 'Seeckt als Chef der Heeresleitung'. These negotiations are summarised fairly accurately by von Rabenau, op. cit., pp. 308–09, and by Hallgarten, loc. cit., p. 31. Much more inaccurate is the version of these negotiations in W. Görlitz, *Der Deutsche Generalstab, 1657–1945* (Frankfurt, 1950), p. 339, who says i.a. that in the autumn of 1921 Radek demanded from Seeckt, during a conversation in Berlin, German military support in case of another attack by Poland on Soviet Russia!

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demanded a military rapprochement with Russia.[16] As he wrote during the same month to Hasse: 'It must be our aim to reach a treaty which secures help for us. I will do everything to obtain it; but until this is achieved, appearances must help us. Our means of power are small. The opinion of the enemy must multiply them. . . .' [17]

Further negotiations with the Russians took place during the summer of 1922, for example, between Hasse and Krestinsky, the official Soviet representative in Berlin. The Ruhr industrialists offered to finance the Russian enterprise. At the beginning of July a Russian named Rozenblatt arrived in Berlin and was received by Seeckt. Rozenblatt tried to interest the German generals in military supplies to be bought from Russia and suggested that Germany should maintain aeroplanes in Russia. A preliminary agreement was signed during the night of 29 July 1922; a fortnight later Major Fischer went to Moscow to bring the military understanding to a conclusion, while Hasse continued to negotiate in Berlin, in Schleicher's flat, about the establishment of an armaments industry in Russia. On 19 December he again met Radek there, to discuss details of armaments, and Radek enlarged upon the possibility of an alliance between Germany, Russia, the United States, and possibly China. A Russian general visited the German infantry training school, and Russian warships called at German Baltic ports.[18]

TO achieve a uniform direction in all questions of German military policy towards Russia, Dr Gessler, the Minister of Defence, in November 1922, issued an instruction that in future the Chief of the *Truppenamt* was to be responsible for these matters within the Defence Ministry, including naval matters, as the interests of the army were to be given priority.[19] Even within the Ministry excessive secrecy seems to have prevailed, at least as far as the navy was concerned. When the Russians early in 1923 made an independent approach to the German navy, seeking, above all, information in the fields of naval construction and tactical-strategical experiences, these approaches were not only

[16] Nachlass Seeckt, box 19, no. 278, pp. 51, 53, 59.

[17] von Rabenau, op. cit., p. 313: letter of 17 May 1922.

[18] Nachlass Seeckt, box 19, no. 278, pp. 59–60, 71; Hallgarten, loc. cit., p. 32. The meeting of 19 December 1922 took place between Radek and Hasse, not Seeckt, as stated by E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, iii, 436, who has been misled by an ambiguous remark in von Rabenau, op. cit., p. 319. The statements of J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, op. cit., pp. 127–28, that 'within this group the moving spirit was Kurt von Schleicher', and that Seeckt preferred 'to direct the course of events through von Schleicher's able and disingenuous mind', are not borne out by the evidence: the leading negotiator on the German side throughout was Hasse, not Schleicher, who then was only a major. Gordon, op. cit., p. 344, also overlooks the leading part played by Hasse when he says: 'The first conversations, in which Schleicher, Fischer, and Ritter von Niedermayer represented the Reichswehr, revealed far-reaching Soviet plans. . . .' Given the structure of the Reichswehr, it would have been quite inconceivable that three majors were entrusted with negotiations of such importance.

[19] Copy of the instruction of 23 November 1922 in: Admiralität, Marine-Kommando-Amt, Flottenabteilung, Organisatorische Fragen: PG 34 057 A I a-V: Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, Freiburg.

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treated as highly important by the naval officers concerned, opening up vast perspectives and possibilities; they also thought that it might be necessary to act independently of the army command, in particular of General Hasse, if they made any difficulties or showed lack of interest! In the practical field, it was suggested that the Russians might build submarines, aeroplanes, mines, etc., according to German designs and with German personnel, on condition that Germany derived certain advantages from these constructions. During the second conversation with the Russians the question of submarines was again discussed, this time in the presence of Major von Niedermayer from the army. But nothing seems to have resulted from these approaches; three months later someone wrote in pencil on the original memorandum: 'No further steps taken, by arrangement with army'.[20] No document showing a continuation of contacts between the German and the Russian navies is contained in this file for the subsequent three years; and a Soviet offer to train members of the fleet air arm in Russia was refused.[21] Meanwhile the German navy obtained facilities for the construction of submarines and other weapons forbidden by the Treaty of Versailles in Holland and other neutral countries.

The army, however, was far more active. On the commercial side, 'Gefu' was established in 1923 with offices in Berlin and in Moscow, and with a capital fixed after the end of the German inflation at 75 million gold marks. Under its supervision several armaments projects were started. In Russian factories at Zlatoust (Urals), Tula, Petrograd (the former Putilov works), and Schlüsselburg 300,000 shells were produced for the German army and finally shipped to Germany in 1926. There a leak promptly occurred, and a Social-Democratic interpellation took place in the Reichstag, which led to certain disclosures by the Minister of Defence, and to a spirited defence of his actions by the former Chancellor Wirth.[22]

At Fili near Moscow Junkers began to produce aeroplanes and engines for Russian account; the factory had an annual capacity of 600 aeroplanes, but difficulties soon arose. With the rapid devaluation of the German mark Junkers found it increasingly difficult to finance the factory, while after the end of the inflation the German army was unable to secure the necessary funds from the government. Economic conditions in Russia, too, proved unsuitable for the enterprise, and the factory at Fili

[20] Admiralität, Marine-Kommando-Amt, Flotten-Abteilung, Marinepolitische Angelegenheiten: 7897 A Ic 1-1; 'Niederschrift betr. Besprechung des Kapitäns Steffan mit Herrn Petroff von der Russischen Botschaft am 20.III.' [1923], with a pencilled note: 'Weitere Schritte unterblieben wegen Absprechung mit Heer. A II C. G 1/7': Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, Freiburg.

[21] Helm Speidel, 'Reichswehr und Rote Armee', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, i, 1953, p. 18.

[22] Tschunke's report of 13 February 1939, loc. cit., p. 49; Hilger and Meyer, op. cit., p. 194; Otto Gessler, *Reichswehrpolitik in der Weimarer Zeit* (Stuttgart, 1958), pp. 199, 221.

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had to be closed down in 1927.[23] At Trotsk near Samara, a factory was established to manufacture poison gas, and for this purpose a German-Soviet joint stock company, 'Bersol', was founded. The factory produced chlorine, phosgene and other gases, but about 1925 serious differences developed with the Russians who complained about lack of information, and this enterprise too was closed down at about the same time as the Junkers factory.[24] In January 1926 Generals Seeckt and Hasse went to the Soviet Embassy in Berlin and negotiated with Krestinsky, the ambassador, Stomiankov (probably Stomoniakov, the head of the Berlin Soviet trade delegation),[25] and a military attaché named Liuniov. The Russians expressed their dissatisfaction with 'Gefu', the slow pace of arms production, and the financial arrangements, and asked for large German credits, of which 20 million (goldmarks?) were to be spent for military purposes. Although it was agreed that the existing difficulties must be surmounted and that the work should be continued, little seems to have resulted, the financial difficulties especially proving insoluble.[26] About this time 'Gefu' itself ran into serious financial trouble through speculations of its own and had to be liquidated. But its functions were taken over by a similar organisation called 'Wirtschaftskontor G.m.b.H', which regularly received large sums from the Ministry of Defence.[27]

Perhaps these activities of German firms in Russia permitted them to make certain experiments and to obtain a certain amount of information; but considering the large sums that were spent the return seems to have been very small, if not negligible, and the same seems to apply to the later stages when firms such as Krupps, Daimler, and Rheinmetall

[23] Nachlass Seeckt, box 19, no. 281, pp. 33, 53; p. 6 (1924); Tschunke's report, loc. cit., p. 49; Wheeler-Bennett, op. cit., p. 129; Karl-Heinz Völker in *Beiträge zur Militär- und Kriegsgeschichte*, vol. iii, ed. by the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Stuttgart, 1962), p. 153.

[24] Tschunke's report, loc. cit., p. 49; Gessler, op. cit., p. 199; letter of the SPD leaders Herman Müller and Otto Wels to Dr Gessler of 6 December 1926, Anlage 12: Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Reichskanzlei, Akten betreffend Reichswehr, vol. v: R 43 I 686. This letter shows how accurately the SPD was informed about the secret undertakings of the Reichswehr.

[25] E. H. Carr, op. cit., iii, 366. As Seeckt wrote to his wife on 15 January 1925, this man was not a Russian but a Bulgar who had fought under Seeckt during the First World War: Nachlass Seeckt, microfilm at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, roll 28.

[26] Nachlass Seeckt, box 7, no. 53: diary notes of General von Seeckt about a conference at the Russian Embassy on 30 January [1926]. According to these 'Gefu', Junkers and aeroplanes, the poison gas factory, and an 'M.G.' factory (probably a machine gun factory) were discussed, as well as a credit to Russia of 150 or 300 million (goldmarks?). Liuniov: Reichswehrministerium, Marineleitung, Akten betr. Russland, 1 SKL. Ic-4, vol. i, PG/33617, mentions a Russian military attaché Lunieff in Berlin in March 1926.

[27] Hilger and Meyer, op. cit., p. 194; Gatzke, loc. cit., pp. 578–79; Tschunke's report, loc. cit., p. 49; 'Anlage 13' to the letter of Hermann Müller and Otto Wels to Dr Gessler of 6 December 1926, according to which the 'Wirtschaftskontor' received fortnightly contributions of 1.5 to 2 million gold marks, totalling 35 million marks p.a.: Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Reichskanzlei, Akten betr. Reichswehr, vol. v: R 43 I 686. The continuation of the 'Gefu' work under a different name is overlooked in Tschunke's report and by Wheeler-Bennett, op. cit., p. 129.

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had installations at Kazan, in which Russian officers were instructed in the manufacture of tanks.[28] If Seeckt in 1922 stated as one of his aims the 'strengthening of Russia in the economic and political, and thus also in the military field', this may have been achieved to a certain extent. It seems much more doubtful, however, whether his other aim—'the direct strengthening of ourselves, through helping to develop in Russia an armaments industry which in case of need can serve us'—was advanced to any appreciable extent.[29]

INTO an entirely different category fall the direct military enterprises of the Reichswehr in Russia which enabled it to train officers in certain weapons it was forbidden to possess under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. These activities were supervised by 'Zentrale Moskau', the head of which was first Colonel Thomsen and later Major von Niedermayer. He had under him a small permanent staff of German officers who had formally been discharged from the Reichswehr. 'Zentrale Moskau' looked after all German personnel in Russia and the German military establishments maintained there. The first German officers were sent to Russia in 1922 to attend training courses, and soon Russian officers were sent to Germany for the same purpose. German officers acted as instructors of the Red air force. Russian manoeuvres were attended by high-ranking German officers, and German ones by their Soviet opposite numbers. Russian officers came to Berlin to participate in the training of officers by the *Truppenamt*, which had taken the place of the forbidden General Staff courses. There, according to recent German accounts, Colonel von Blomberg, later Hitler's Minister of Defence, was one of the teachers, and several later Soviet marshals were among his pupils.[30] A rather comic incident occurred in 1931 when one of these Russian pupils forgot his attaché case, containing German tactical material and his Russian notes, in a taxi in Berlin. The military authorities decided that the case 'belonged' to a German captain who was having Russian lessons: there were no Russians in the Ministry of Defence. The police and others were informed accordingly.[31] The story of top secret documents left in a taxi sounds oddly familiar.

Most important from the German point of view were the three secret military training grounds in Russia, one for tanks, one for poison gas, and the third for aviation, which were entirely under German management. The tank school was established near Kazan and the chemical warfare school near Saratov lower down the Volga; the training of flying

[28] L. Kochan, *Russia and the Weimar Republic* (London, 1954), p. 124. For the negotiations between the Russians and Rheinmetall in 1930, see Gatzke, loc. cit., pp. 591–94.

[29] Seeckt stated these aims in his memorandum to Chancellor Wirth of 11 September 1922: published in *Der Monat*, no. 2, November 1948, p. 47.

[30] Görlitz, op. cit., p. 340; Gatzke, loc. cit., p. 579, 580, 583; Hilger and Meyer, op. cit., pp. 196, 198, 207; Völker in *Beiträge zur Militär- und Kriegsgeschichte*, iii, 134.

[31] Microfilm of 'Akten des Reichwehrministeriums', roll 52, at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich: Wehrmachtabteilung, Nachrichtenstelle, Geheim-Akten betr. Verschiedenes: O.K.W. 857; report dated 30 April 1931.

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personnel took place at first apparently at Smolensk, but was later transferred to Lipetsk, to the north of Voronezh, in the province of Tambov.[32] From the outset General von Seeckt had endeavoured to circumvent the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles which forbade Germany the possession of an air force and the training of flying personnel. For this reason 180 flying officers had been taken over into the Reichswehr, and a *Fliegerzentrale* continued to exist within the *Truppenamt* in the Ministry of Defence, headed at first by Colonel Thomsen and consisting of some experienced officers; but it was difficult to provide flying practice for these officers, and even more difficult was the training of new recruits.[33] This only became possible through the agreements with Russia. From 1922 onwards German flying personnel received their training there. In 1923 Colonel Thomsen was sent there as the commanding officer of all German flying personnel.[34] In the same year Hasse bought in Holland one hundred Fokker fighter aircraft—with money provided by the 'Ruhrfond', collected to finance passive resistance in the Ruhr. When this resistance collapsed bigger sums became available, and these were used to build at Lipetsk a large modern aerodrome with hangars, wharves, construction and repair shops where engines could be tested, administrative and living quarters, a hospital, radio and telephone installations, etc. The permanent German establishment consisted of about sixty people. During the summer months about fifty German officers received their flight training there, and another seventy to a hundred people were employed on technical experiments. Between 1925 and 1933 about 120 fighter pilots were trained at Lipetsk, and between 1928 and 1930 about a hundred observers for reconnaissance duties (a function that was performed in Germany after 1930). The whole area of the aerodrome was carefully wired off and guarded. Cooperation with the Russians was smooth and extended to the participation of German aeroplanes in Russian manoeuvres, and artillery and flying practice in conjunction with Russian infantry and artillery.[35] It seems that the arrangements at the Kazan tank school which was founded

[32] Hilger and Meyer, op. cit., pp. 196, 207; E. H. Carr, *German-Soviet Relations between the two World Wars*, p. 61, quoting a letter of Krasin to his wife of September 1922; Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, Zeugenschrifttum No. 217: General Erich Freiherr von dem Bussche-Ippenburg about his attendance, together with General von Blomberg, at Red Army manoeuvres in 1928 and a visit to the three German training grounds for air, tanks, and gas (but not mentioning their location); von Blomberg's report about this visit is to be published in the forthcoming issue of the *Review of Slavonic and East European Studies*; Helm Speidel, 'Reichswehr und Rote Armee', *Vierteljahrschefte für Zeitgeschichte*, i, 1953, p. 18.

[33] von Rabenau, op. cit., p. 528; Görlitz, op. cit., p. 365; Hilmar Ritter von Mittelberger, 'Lebenserinnerungen', Ms. in the Bundesarchiv Koblenz, p. 254; Völker, op. cit., pp. 126–27.

[34] Nachlass Seeckt, box 19, no. 281, pp. 33, 53; Thomsen was appointed on 20 September and left for Russia on 13 November 1923: '20.9. wird Oberst Thomsen bestimmt, als Leitender Führer des Luftfahrtpersonals nach Russland zu gehen'. This against the opinion of Gatzke, loc. cit., p. 576.

[35] Völker, op. cit., pp. 134, 140–42; Speidel, loc. cit., pp. 23–25, 29–30, 36–37. This paper contains a detailed description of Lipetsk and its achievements, drawn from the author's own experiences.

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some years later were similar, but we do not possess much information about it.[36]

As General von Seeckt was the initiator and protagonist of a pro-Russian foreign policy, it has often been thought that his dismissal in the autumn of 1926 brought with it the loosening of ties between the Reichswehr and Soviet Russia. Soon after Seeckt's dismissal revelations began to be made about 'Gefu' undertakings, especially the manufacture of shells and poison gas, and the subject was used by Philip Scheidemann and other Social-Democratic leaders for an attack upon the Reichswehr policy, and upon its whole attitude towards the Republic. The Reichstag deputies were well primed by a secret Junkers memorandum, for this firm had had to liquidate its factory at Fili and was trying to recover its losses from the wreck. In addition, this was the time of Germany's entry into the League of Nations, of the conclusion of the Treaty of Locarno, and of Stresemann's pro-western foreign policy, so that a simultaneous reduction of the pro-Russian commitments might have been expected. The whole theory is given weight by Seeckt's biographer, General von Rabenau, who—after discussing Scheidemann's attack upon the Reichswehr's policy—continues: 'During the following period this naturally forced the army to take precautions, to cover up and cut down. And as the authority of Seeckt's personality disappeared, much that he had achieved could no longer be maintained (*hat sich vieles, was Seeckt erreicht hatte, dann nicht mehr halten lassen*). . . .'[37] It may be that von Rabenau wrote these lines for political reasons in about 1939: in any case, they are not in accordance with the facts. Although some of the rather unpromising economic undertakings were liquidated about 1927, this does not apply to the much more important military training establishments in Russia, nor to the close contacts between the two general staffs. No other than one of Seeckt's successors, General Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord, who was Chief of the Army Command from 1930 until the beginning of 1934, wrote in the margin of Rabenau's book at the place just quoted: 'This is incorrect. Seeckt's Russian policy was continued *without* change after his resignation.'[38]

Curiously enough, it was the Russians who were pressing for a change, not the Germans. As one of Seeckt's trusted underlings, Major Fischer, wrote to his former master in March 1927, the Russians then demanded that the German training schools in Russia be liquidated if no legal way could be found to continue them; they did not want to have another

[36] Speidel's assertion, loc. cit., p. 18, that the Kazan school was founded about 1930 seems to be an error. In general Gatzke, loc. cit., pp. 586–87, and Hilger and Meyer, op. cit., pp. 196, 198, 207, who imply that the Kazan school existed since 1926 or 1927. Speidel's assertion is repeated by Völker, op. cit., p. 134.

[37] von Rabenau, op. cit., p. 320.

[38] Copy of von Rabenau's book with marginal notes by von Hammerstein-Equord in the possession of the Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Militärarchiv, Verw. Buch No. 134: 'stimmt nicht. Die Russl. Politik von Seeckt ist auch nach seinem Abgang *un*verändert weiter geführt worden. vH.' I am indebted to Colonel Teske of the Militärarchiv for this reference.

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surprise such as the recent 'disclosures' with all their political consequences. The writer assumed that this pressure was due to the German Communist party, which had suffered seriously from the 'disclosures' and their stout denial, and that it was the Russian Communist party which now had the decisive voice and was steering the course; the Russian political authorities were going to take the matter up with the German Foreign Office.[39] Some weeks later the same writer reported that the Russian military had not yet replied to the German proposals for a continuation of the Russian enterprises and were awaiting a decision of their political authorities. The German miltary concerned had decided to be more explicit in pressing for a reply—a policy which the Russians, to judge by past experience, understood better than too polite an approach. The Germans hoped that the Russian military would in the end prevail upon their political authorities. The writer thought it strange that this time the Russians were full of doubts, while the German Foreign Office had given its approval.[40] In the end, however, the German officers were successful in allaying Russian suspicions, and, if anything, military cooperation became closer than it had been before. As early as June 1927 Seeckt noted, on the basis of information supplied by Fischer, that the Russian affair was now doing well.[41] More German officers were sent to Russia and attached to Red Army units, and more high-ranking German officers attended Russian manoeuvres. The tank school at Kazan finally got started. German scientists went to Orenburg to assist the Russians in experiments in chemical warfare. When Marshal Tukhachevsky and a large delegation of Russian officers paid a return visit to Germany they were even received by President von Hindenburg.[42]

HOW important these Russian connections were from the point of view of the Reichswehr emerges from a document drafted by the same officer, Fischer, meanwhile promoted colonel and a departmental head within the *Truppenamt*, in July 1931.

> The question has been asked [this runs], what concessions it would be possible to make during the weekend talks between Reich Chancellor Brüning and the English ministers MacDonald and Henderson, if these should broach the subject of our activities in Russia. *It has to be pointed out at the beginning of these considerations that any concession with regard to the cooperation with the Russians in the German experimental establishments is out of the question.* It only remains to deny all such allegations, which we have *denied with success* for ten years, in the future as well. . . . From the Russian

[39] Letter of Major H. Fischer to Seeckt, dated Berlin-Wilmersdorf, 12 March 1927: Nachlass Seeckt, roll 18, no. 87, fasz. 19, microfilm at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich.

[40] Letter of Major Fischer to Seeckt, dated Berlin-Wilmersdorf, 29 March 1927: ibid In general Gatzke, loc. cit., p. 587; Helbig, op. cit., p. 196.

[41] Nachlass Seeckt, box 7, no. 53; diary note of 3 June 1927: 'Fischer Russischer (*sic*) läuft z. Zt. gut, . . .'.

[42] Hilger and Meyer, op. cit., pp. 207, 251; Gatzke, loc. cit., pp. 587–88; Helbig, op. cit., pp. 195–96.

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> side, if any such concession by us to the English became known, the most severe reproach of disloyalty would rightly be made to us. How touchy the Russians are in this respect can be proved not only by their continuous hints as to the necessity of greater secrecy, but also by the fact that the sales to us of Russian shells, which were divulged by Scheidemann in the *Reichstag*, caused severe friction and trouble. The Russians then demanded that the German government, as a precondition for the continuation of our common experiments, should cover our experimental and training activities in Russia and should secure their secrecy by all means of state authority. . . .[43]

In 1928 Fischer's department had even protested strongly against the building of the first pocket battleship, as this might disturb the good relations between Germany and Russia.[44] In 1931 the Minister of Defence, General Groener, took an extremely serious view of the fact that the place and cause of the death of a German captain, Amlinger, during flying operations at Lipetsk were not only given in full by his widow in the notice announcing his death in a German paper, but led to various press comments, for example in the liberal *Berliner Tageblatt*. From the army's point of view this was treason, and Groener tried to insist, against the opinion of the German Foreign Office representatives, that legal proceedings be started: unless a strong line were taken, further disclosures would follow, and the government would be guilty of adopting an attitude of 'apparently outright ridiculous inconsistency'.[45]

Contacts between the German and the Russian navies were much slower in developing, and never became very intimate. What approaches there were came usually from the Russians, while the attitude of the German naval officers remained one of the greatest reserve. In March 1926 a conference took place in Berlin which was attended by three high-ranking German naval officers, Major Fischer and Colonel Thomsen of the German army, the Russian military attaché Luniev, and a Russian naval officer named Oras. The Russians expressed a wish to cooperate with the German navy and to share the German experience in naval construction, especially that of submarines, which they intended to build in the Black Sea; they were willing to let Germany share in the further development of former German submarine types and perhaps to train German personnel and members of the fleet air arm; no proposals seem

[43] Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Nachlass Schleicher, No. 28: memorandum signed Fischer, dated 13 July 1931. Underlined in the original. The above evidence seems to contradict the statement of Helbig, op. cit., p. 203: 'Dabei waren ganz offensichtlich die Kontakte lockerer geworden, und die Beziehungen begannen wirklich zu "versanden",' which refers to the years about 1930.

[44] Reported by General Eugen Ott: Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, Zeugenschrifttum No. 279, dated February 1952.

[45] Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Reichskanzlei, Akten betreffend Reichswehr, vol. vii: R 43 I 688: letter of General Groener to the Foreign Minister Curtius, dated Berlin, 16 January 1931.

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to have been made from the German side.[46] One of the German naval officers present, Rear-Admiral Spindler, was then sent to Russia and inspected naval establishments at Kronstadt. After his return in June he reported to the Chief of the Naval Command, Admiral Zenker; the latter decided that submarine plans, in so far as they could be classified as 'antiquarian', could be handed over to the Russians, and equally the critical report about his tour which Rear-Admiral Spindler had drawn up. Immediately, however, another naval officer added to this note that in his opinion only *some* of the designs should be surrendered: 'it is important that we do not compromise ourselves because the Russians cannot be trusted'.[47]

A conference then took place in the presence of Admiral Zenker, to discuss the aims and principles of German naval policy. The main speaker, Captain von Loewenfeld, stressed that Russia was the greatest enemy of Germany because Bolshevism was the greatest enemy of Western culture; Britain, on the other hand, was at the moment the leader of Western culture; if she were destroyed through communism or through the revolt of her colonies, the danger of the bolshevisation of Europe would become urgent and acute; Britain had recognised the danger of Bolshevism, hence the friends of the Bolsheviks were her enemies. He therefore proposed to seek, with determination, caution and tact, closer contacts with Britain, and also with Italy as a counterweight to France, and only to play with the Russians, to deceive them amicably without their noticing it; the relations with Russia should be used partly to exercise pressure upon Britain, partly to obtain a lessening of Bolshevik propaganda in Germany. Admiral Zenker in his reply stressed the influence of economics upon politics: Germany had to seek markets in Russia. In spite of this he agreed with the main speaker that in the conditions existing for the navy the obvious thing was to cooperate with Britain, and any military cooperation with Russia was to be undertaken only with great caution.[48] Another memorandum drawn up a few days later emphasised that Germany could draw economic advantages from cooperation with Russia, but that military advantages would be small; the Russians were expecting the fulfilment of all their wishes, but were themselves full of distrust; even economic cooperation with Russia entailed a great risk because the political situation there was far from stabilised and internal developments could not be foreseen; military cooperation was possible, if at all, only in certain strictly limited fields,

[46] Reichswehrministerium, Marineleitung, Akten betreffend Russland: I SKL. Ic—4, vol. i, PG/33617: 'Niederschrift über eine Besprechung am 25.III. 1926': Admiralty, London.

[47] Reichswehrministerium, Marineleitung, Akten betreffend Russland: I SKL. Ic—4, vol. i, PG/33617: notes of different naval officers of the Flottenabteilung at naval headquarters, dated 9 and 14 July [1926] with the remark: 'Es bleibt wichtig, dass wir uns nicht kompromittieren, da den Russen nicht zu trauen ist.'

[48] 'Niederschrift über die Besprechung beim Chef der Marineleitung am 22.7.26 über die Richtlinien und Ziele der deutschen Marinepolitik', Admiralität, Marine-Kommando-Amt, Flotten-Abteilung, Marinepolitische Angelegenheiten: 7897 A Ic 1–1: Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, Freiburg.

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e.g. submarines; if the Russians put forward other demands, they should be treated in a dilatory fashion; if relations with the Soviet navy became known, this would cause strong reactions in Finland and, above all, would make it very difficult, if not impossible, to establish contacts with the British navy.[49]

A few weeks later Rear-Admiral Spindler asked for an official decision whether the German navy should establish a mission in Moscow similar to that maintained there by the army, and whether Russian officers should be invited to attend German manoeuvres. Both suggestions were turned down by Admiral Zenker, who ordered that no further initiative should be taken on the German side; they should await what the Russians would do. Before this decision was taken a conference had taken place between General von Seeckt and Admiral Zenker during which the former was fully informed about the hesitant attitude of the navy, 'which was dictated by naval-political reasons', while Seeckt informed Zenker about the intentions of the army and its views about the value of cooperation with Russia.[50] Nothing more was done until 1929, when Major von Niedermayer in Moscow once more suggested the establishment of contacts between the two navies, apparently without any result.[51]

HOW divergent the approach of the army and the navy was towards cooperation with the Russians emerged once more in 1930, when a German armaments firm at Ruhla in Thuringia asked the *Waffenamt* for permission to hand over to the Russians the construction and design of a mechanical time fuse which it was producing. The *Waffenamt* was in favour and asked the *Truppenamt* to obtain the required consent of the navy. There difficulties developed. Several officers expressed their opposition; in the opinion of one of them, the Russians were such uncertain customers that the Germans had no interest in handing over to them this valuable time fuse; 'if we give up something we want to have some advantage from it! . . .' It required the intervention of the Chief of the *Truppenamt*, Major-General von Hammerstein-Equord (soon to succeed Heye as Chief of the Army Command), to assuage the ruffled feelings of the navy; he had to promise that, through his influence with the Russians, he would obtain from them a quid pro quo of equal value for the navy, and this proposal seems to have been accepted.[52] Perhaps it was in an attempt to eliminate friction of this kind that one of the departmental heads within the *Truppenamt*, Lieutenant-Colonel Fischer, who was so intimately concerned with the army's Russian

[49] Reichswehrministerium, Marineleitung, Akten betr. Russland: 1 SKL. Ic—4, vol. i, PG/33617, dated 29 July 1926: Admiralty, London.

[50] Ibid., dated 24 August 1926.

[51] Ibid., dated 18 February 1929.

[52] Ibid., enquiry of the *Waffenamt* of 5 March 1930, with notes by various naval officers made during the following weeks, e.g.: 'Wenn wir Sachen abgeben, wollen wir etwas davon haben! hier zieht uns die Verfilzung der H.L. mit R. wahrscheinlich wieder etwas aus der Nase—ohne Gewinn für uns. A II.'

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undertakings, in December 1930 addressed naval officers about the attitude of the army towards foreign countries. He listed those countries with which Germany maintained good relations, or was aiming at the establishment of better relations, and singled out Poland as the country with which relations were strained. Towards three countries Germany was conducting an 'active military policy': Russia, Finland, and Lithuania, the latter in spite of the Memel issue because Lithuania was a possible ally against Poland; again, with regard to Finland, the aim was to mediate between that country and Russia, so that Russia in case of a war with Poland would not be forced to maintain eight divisions on the Finnish frontier.[53] The overriding consideration clearly remained enmity towards Poland and the possibility of an anti-Polish war, side by side with Russia and Lithuania.[54]

Shortly afterwards, one of the naval officers concerned, Lieutenant-Commander Lietzmann, explained to the Chief of the *Truppenamt* the differing attitude of the navy. While recognising the overwhelming interest of the army in the Russian army, which was justified from the point of view of land warfare, the dependence of Germany on the Anglo-Saxon powers, which dominated the seas, demanded a certain caution towards Russia on the part of the navy, a caution reinforced by the fact that the German navy for some time past had developed special technical interests in Finland with regard to material and armament; thus closer contacts with Russia were bound to deprive Germany of one of her most valuable resources. Furthermore, according to a report made after a tour of inspection by high-ranking German naval officers to the Russian Baltic and Black Sea fleets in the summer of 1930, the Russian navy was still in the first phase of possible later developments: the German navy had nothing to receive from the Russians, even less to learn from them.[55] As the same officer explained a few months later at a military conference, the Russian navy, influenced much more than the army by political education and communist ideas, was not for the time being a factor of military value. Any cooperation in war presupposed closer contacts in peace-time if it were to have any success. Such contacts, however, would according to international usage bring with them reciprocal naval visits, and these were out of the question; for it would be indefensible to expose the first-rate German naval personnel in their thousands to closer contact with Soviet sailors, if only for a limited time. Apart from numerous other considerations, the idea

53 Admiralität, Marine-Kommando-Amt, Flotten-Abteilung, Marinepolitische Angelegenheiten: 1 SKL. Ic 1–2, PG/33611: dated 20 December 1930: Admiralty, London.

54 That the same was true of the Russians may be seen from the statement made in the same year by General Uborevich, soon to be appointed Deputy People's Commissar for War, under the influence of too much vodka: 'Will we not be ready now in two years to carry out frontier adjustments and to kill the Poles? After all, we must once again partition Poland.' Quoted from a German diplomatic report of February 1930 by Gatzke, loc. cit., p. 594.

55 Admiralität, Marine-Kommando-Amt, Flottenabteilung, Marinepolitische Angelegenheiten: 1 SKL. Ic 1–2, PG/33611: 'Vortrag . . . am 9.1.31 von A II c vor dem Chef des Truppenamts gehalten': Admiralty, London.

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of closer contact with the Russian navy, attractive as it might be for reasons of power policy, could not be entertained.[56] The same ideas were set out in detail in a letter to the *Truppenamt* in May 1931 in almost identical terms: the utmost the naval command would be willing to concede, if the Russians desired it, would be to give 'advisory support' in the development of Russian submarines and torpedoes.[57] And there the matter rested. The army was unable to persuade the navy to adopt a different attitude, in spite of the traditionally greater weight of the German army in all decisive questions.[58]

On this basis the relations of the Reichswehr with the Red Army continued until after Hitler had come to power. As late as May 1933 a delegation of high-ranking German officers visited Moscow to hold conversations with the general staff of the Red Army. They were fêted in Moscow, and at a banquet in their honour Marshal Voroshilov stressed that the ties linking the two armies should remain intact.[59] Shortly after, however, Hitler decreed that the cooperation must be terminated as quickly as possible and that all German military contacts with Russia must be broken off. These orders were carried out. In the autumn of 1933 the *Truppenamt* sent staff officers to Russia with instructions to liquidate the German establishments there, and this was done, with the hesitant cooperation of the Russian authorities who permitted a certain amount of material to be shipped to Germany, but naturally took over the rest.[60] The course attended by flying officers during the summer of 1933 at Lipetsk proved to be the last. There is no evidence that 'the work continued until the abrogation by Hitler in March 1935 of the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles rendered such clandestine activities unnecessary', as stated by Mr Wheeler-Bennett.[61] Long before that date experiments in tank and aerial warfare could be, and were, conducted in Germany, and political cooperation with Russia was anathema to Germany's new master, at least at the time.[62] Moreover, Seeckt's political concept—the frontiers of 1914—which had been

[56] Ibid.: 'Vortrag Korvettenkapitän Lietzmann vor den Teilnehmern der Abwehrtagung am 4. Juni 1931—Die militärische Bedeutung der Ostsee': Admiralty, London.

[57] Reichswehrministerium, Marineleitung, Akten betreffend Russland: 1 SKL. Ic—4, vol. i, PG/33617: sent to the *Truppenamt* on 2 May 1931. Similarly another shorter letter to the *Truppenamt* of 5 November 1931: Admiralty, London.

[58] The formal reason for this was the fact that the 'Chief of the Naval Command' was in no way subordinate to the 'Chief of the Army Command', but his equal. In Germany, however, the army was the senior service and usually got its way if the issue was really important.

[59] Hilger and Meyer, op. cit., p. 256.

[60] Speidel, loc. cit., p. 41, with a detailed description of the process of liquidation at Lipetsk. Hilmar Ritter von Mittelberger, 'Lebenserinnerungen', MS. in Bundesarchiv Koblenz, p. 254, also states that the last training course at Lipetsk took place in the summer of 1933.

[61] Wheeler-Bennett, op. cit., p. 129. His authority is E. Wollenberg's book on *The Red Army* (London, 1938), p. 238.

[62] Hilger and Meyer, op. cit., p. 257, say that 'the Red Army suddenly demanded that the Reichswehr liquidate every one of its enterprises in Russia', and give the date when this happened as May 1933. It is, of course, possible that the demand was made at about the same time from both sides; but Speidel's version seems to be the more credible.

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the basis of this cooperation from the outset, had no attractions for Hitler, whose aims were far more ambitious. Thus ended a military understanding which had lasted for almost twelve years. There seems little doubt that both armies had considerably profited from it, and that the rapid German rearmament, especially in the air, would have been impossible without this preliminary work.[63] It should be borne in mind, however, that the Red Army too, with its lack of technical experience, had learnt a great deal from its German instructors and from the German plans and designs handed over to it—on balance it was perhaps the chief gainer. It is one of the ironies of history that the two armies were to show on the battlefield how much they had gained from the secret understanding that came to an end a mere eight years before Hitler decided upon the invasion of Soviet Russia.

[63] Compare the careful summing up of Speidel, loc. cit., pp. 44–45, and the opinion of Theodor Schieder, *Die Probleme des Rapallo-Vertrags* (Cologne and Opladen, 1956), pp. 28–29.

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NATIONAL-BOLSHEVISM

Arthur Spencer

ON three occasions in the lifetime of the Weimar Republic German communism had to grapple with the ideas of nationalism, each time in a period of crisis of democracy. The first time was 1919 during the discussion of the Versailles treaty, the second in the year of inflation 1923, and the third in 1930 during the nazi offensive against the Weimar system.

The story can be written in terms of the relations of the Communist party to the social-democrats. In 1919, when traditions of internationalism and of opposition to the war were very strong and there was a reasonable chance that the communists might soon win over a considerable part of the working class, the reply to the challenge of nationalism was unmistakably negative; any concession to nationalism was regarded as unprincipled as well as foolish. In 1923, when the traditional idea that the communists should concentrate entirely on the working class had been modified by Lenin's suggestion that they should use all 'explosive social material' for their purposes, there was an odd but short-lived flirtation with nationalism on the one side, while at the same time the German Communist party (KPD) was able to establish a united front with a large part of the Social-Democratic party. The last phase, from 1930 to 1932, was a period when the nationalist trend was of importance in KPD policy, but there was no longer any cooperation with the social-democrats; on the contrary, on one memorable occasion the communists engaged in a united front with the nazis against the social-democrats!

With each turn of the screw the distance from the traditions of the German socialist left before 1914, from which Spartacus rose, grew greater, and in the final phase the Stalinist conceptions of bolshevism entirely dominated the scene, with disastrous results.

During the Versailles crisis the German communists refused to take sides; they declared that under capitalism acceptance or rejection of the treaty was equally disastrous. Refusal of the challenge presented by the new situation of a defeated Germany placed between the Western democracies and Soviet Russia could hardly have been more uncompromising. The first proposal to link communism with the cause of national resistance to Versailles came from a man of the extreme right, Paul Eltzbacher, a university professor. In 1919 he published a pamphlet called *Bolshevism and the German future*.[1] That a man of Eltzbacher's extremely patriotic and conservative background should suggest in all seriousness that Germany should introduce bolshevism en bloc in order

[1] P. Eltzbacher, *Der Bolschewismus und die deutsche Zukunft* (Jena, 1919). A detailed survey of national bolshevism in Germany with particular emphasis on the right is given in O. E. Schüddekopf, *Linke Leute von rechts* (Stuttgart, 1960).

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to save herself from complete enslavement by the Versailles powers created a great sensation. Indifferent to parliamentary democracy, he declared himself deeply impressed by the organic character of the Soviet structure. Thoroughgoing nationalisation without compensation would be preferable to the retention of a system of private property exploited by the Allies. Even if the transition to bolshevism were to mean a period of chaos, that would be better than the premature establishment of law and order which would only provide an efficient mechanism for Germany's exploitation. Disorder, civil war, famine, all these would be incomparably lesser evils than national enslavement. An alliance of this new Germany with Soviet Russia would protect the venerable civilisations of India and China from the shallow materialist civilisation of the Anglo-Saxon world. At the same time the alliance of a bolshevist Germany with Soviet Russia would spread communism to the West. There was, he urged, a great moral force in the idea of the international community of the workers.

With this pamphlet, Eltzbacher became the true begetter of a new trend in German political thought, the concept of national-bolshevism. He had arrived at his radical conclusions as a German nationalist. He advocated communism in the context of a defeated Germany flanked by the victorious liberal capitalist West, and by Soviet Russia, another outcast from the comity of bourgeois nations. Eltzbacher's ideas must have had considerable influence, especially among officers. When Karl Radek, the guiding spirit of nascent German communism, was held a prisoner in Germany during 1919, he received visits from many former dignitaries of the old regime, from whom he learned of this new political trend.[2] In their dislike of Western parliamentarianism, imposed on Germany by military defeat, and their distaste for the trade unions, intellectual conservatives such as Martin Spahn, a well-known historian and right-wing politician, and Count Reventlow, a leading Pan-German, would express sympathy for soviets as a system of government in a thoroughly right-wing journal such as the *Süddeutsche Monatshefte*. Reventlow thought that the soviet idea was rooted in ancient Teutonic institutions and therefore more suitable for Germany than Western democracy.

IT is against this background of national-bolshevist currents among officer circles that the genesis of the national-bolshevist heresy within German communism must be seen. When Radek was having his discussions with Baron Reibnitz, Admiral Hintze, and Colonel Bauer, the German Communist party was undergoing a severe crisis, its membership about equally divided on the issues of participation in elections and of joining the 'reformist' trade unions, and in October 1919 it split. For a time there were two communist groups in Germany, the expelled opposition being the one with syndicalist leanings. Two of the leaders of these dissident communists were Laufenberg and Wolffheim, men with long

[2] E. H. Carr, 'Radek's "political salon" in Berlin, 1919.' *Soviet Studies*, 3, 1951/52.

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and distinguished service in the Hamburg labour movement, who had played a prominent part in the November revolution of 1918 in their town. Immediately after the break with the official Communist party, on 1 November 1919, Laufenberg and Wolffheim came out with their national-communist manifesto.[3] The revolutionary proletariat, they argued, should establish its dictatorship by means of soviets, but instead of antagonising the other classes, this dictatorship should do its utmost to bring the entire nation over to its side by an appeal to nationalism. In mobilising all forces for a revolutionary war against the capitalist West, a red army would be created based on the workers of individual factories in true syndicalist style, and staffed by officers of the old military class whose hatred of the Versailles system would draw them into a common front with the workers; in alliance with Soviet Russia they would be invincible. In such a situation the 'party truce' of 1914, which at the time had served reactionary ends, would be replaced by a 'revolutionary party truce'. Thus, all the elements of the national-bolshevist theories of the years to come were anticipated in the Laufenberg-Wolffheim doctrine of 1919: the emphasis on a Germany reduced to a colony of the capitalist West, the approach to the idea of the proletarian revolution as a means to an end, the widening of the revolutionary front beyond the working class by an alliance with the officers of the old regime, the urban lower middle classes, and the peasants. The moderate social-democrats were castigated for their lack of patriotism and for being lackeys of the League of Nations. Like Eltzbacher, the two Hamburg national-bolsheviks appealed to the traditions of the Napoleonic wars, when the cause of political reform had fused with the cause of national liberation. Laufenberg and Wolffheim, through their contacts with future leading publicists of the extreme right such as Stapel and the two Günthers, were allowed to put their views to meetings of officers in Hamburg at a time when the Communist party itself was outlawed.[4]

In December 1919, Radek came out strongly against Hamburg national-bolshevism.[5] In the previous year, when the Brest-Litovsk treaty was being negotiated, he had been a fervent advocate of a revolutionary war, but at the end of 1919 he was in a more sober mood. German communism should not commit itself to a war against the Allies in the event of a soviet victory in Germany. A communist Germany would recognise her responsibility for rebuilding the devastated areas of northern France and would be anxious to establish trade relations with Anglo-Saxon countries. While eager to work for the revision of the

[3] H. Laufenberg and F. Wolffheim, *Revolutionärer Volkskrieg oder konter-revolutionärer Bürgerkrieg?* (Hamburg, 1919); H. Laufenberg, *Zwischen der* 1. *und der* 2. *Revolution* (Hamburg, 1919).

[4] W. Stapel and A. E. Günther were later to be the editors of an influential journal of the extreme right, *Deutsches Volkstum*, published in Hamburg.

[5] K. Radek, 'Die auswärtige Politik des deutschen Kommunismus.' *Die Internationale*, 1919, No. 17/18; reprinted in K. Radek and A. Thalheimer, *Gegen den Nationalbolschewismus!* (Leipzig, 1920).

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Versailles treaty, it would expect revision to be a slow and gradual process, depending on the rising tide of revolution in France and Poland, and on the strengthening of Russia. If a communist Germany had to fight the capitalist West, the victorious working class should not reckon on the support of the German bourgeoisie, but rely on help from the working classes of the victor countries. Any subordination of the class struggle at home to the demands of a revolutionary foreign policy would be against the spirit of internationalist Marxism; the term ' proletariat ' should not be dissolved into the more general terms ' people ' or ' nation '.

By May 1920 the opposition communists of the syndicalist persuasion had formed their own separate party. On 1 May 1920 Laufenberg and Wolffheim, as leaders of the Hamburg branch, stated their views in a particularly provocative form. One of the leaders of the official Communist party, Thalheimer, replied in an article in *Rote Fahne*.[6] Germany's national liberation would follow from a German communist victory. If a choice had to be made between the interests of the proletarian revolution and the cause of national liberation, the national question would have to take second place. Communism demanded the subordination of the interests of the proletariat of one nation to the overriding interests of the international revolution. A communist regime would never wage a war of aggression, but would be prepared to defend itself against attack.

IN his criticism of the syndicalist deviation in western communism, entitled *Leftism, the infantile disease of communism*, drafted in April 1920, Lenin curtly dismissed the Hamburg doctrines as a hotchpotch of absurdities. In no circumstances, he wrote, should German communists promise to repudiate the Versailles treaty immediately they came to power, or hold out hopes of war against the West. A revolutionary party should not tie its hands by promises it might be unable to keep.

While the Comintern was not averse to taking the errant syndicalist brethren into its fold, even though they had established a rival party of their own, the one condition Lenin insisted on was the expulsion of Laufenberg and Wolffheim. Lenin had failed to notice the nationalist undercurrent in an earlier pamphlet by Laufenberg, *Between the first and the second revolution*, and as late as October 1919 had praised it highly; now he reacted violently against the full grown doctrine. As the majority of the syndicalist party shared Lenin's dislike of the Hamburg heresy, the whole Hamburg section of this party was expelled by their Berlin executive. Laufenberg and Wolffheim's group gradually faded away, not to be heard of again till the early thirties.

Reinforced by the adherence of a large section of the Independent Socialist party, German communism became established as a major political force at the end of 1920, but the revolutionary wave was receding. Laufenberg and Wolffheim had dreamed of a socialist Germany

[6] *Rote Fahne*, May 1920, reprinted in *Gegen den Nationalbolschewismus!*

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allied with Soviet Russia waging a holy war of liberation against the West; the German communists, in the very first days of 1921, suggested to the other working-class parties a much more modest plan of action, including a campaign for the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Russia. At the end of January 1921, a new crisis arose over reparations, and Paul Levi, the leader of the Communist party, chose this moment to launch a completely new slogan, 'Alliance with Soviet Russia', omitting the customary condition that only a communist Germany could conclude such an alliance. The Russian alliance, Paul Levi stated in the *Reichstag*, was the only way to save the German nation from disintegration. Backed by the Russian alliance, the German government would be in a stronger position to negotiate in Paris with the Allies.

The speech, which created quite a stir, had an interesting aftermath in Munich. It stimulated the nationalists of the younger generation to engage in a discussion with communists. The initiative seems to have come from the nationalist side, and was sympathetically received by local communist intellectuals. (The nationalists involved had nothing to do with Hitler's nascent movement.) The most sensational episode in the history of early German communism had been the proclamation of a Soviet Republic in Munich in April 1919. After its defeat by the forces of the central government, a violent reaction against the left had set in. Munich became a hotbed of innumerable military and para-military organisations, and of revolutionary nationalist groups of a different social composition from the extreme right of the old regime. At that time Hitler's movement was just one among many similar groups active in the Munich of those years.

It was in this atmosphere that the editor of the Munich communist daily, Otto Thomas, hit on the idea of throwing open the columns of his paper to a discussion with some representatives of the young nationalist generation. The letters published bore such titles as 'Shall Central Europe perish?', 'The united front of the young generation', and 'The proletariat and young Germany'.[7] Among the contributors was Hans von Hentig, who since 1919 had been publishing volumes of essays on contemporary politics with a strong flavour of the national-bolshevism of the right. A former officer, Hentig was led by his national-bolshevist convictions to act as military adviser to the Communist party. In 1923 when there was a danger of civil war between left-wing Thuringia and right-wing Bavaria, he organised communist military detachments to guard the frontier and, threatened with legal proceedings, escaped to Russia. He returned to face the charges in 1926, but the case was dropped under an amnesty. Hentig is mentioned again in the thirties as a friend of the former socialist and later national-bolshevik, Niekisch. When Hitler came to power, he emigrated to the United States, returning after

[7] *Neue Zeitung* (Munich), 2 and 4 February 1921.

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1945. Hentig is today an emeritus professor in West Germany, known as a distinguished criminologist.

One of the prominent officers of the nationalist volunteer forces active at the time, Captain Josef Römer (Beppo Römer) was so impressed by these discussions with Otto Thomas that he later joined the Communist party. The 1921 discussions set a pattern which was repeated more than once; a few intellectuals and officers are impressed or converted by communist concessions to nationalism, and give their services to the communist cause, but no impression is made on the nationalist movement as a whole. In 1921 the central committee of the KPD, which had just launched its united front appeal to the socialist parties, took a very poor view indeed of the Munich attempt to come to grips with this new political force of revolutionary nationalism. Otto Thomas was expelled for a time, and further attempts on his lines were strictly discouraged.

AFTER 1920, and especially after the defeat of the Red Army before Warsaw in August and the failure of the move to occupy the factories in Italy in September, the bolsheviks turned their mind more and more to the colonial rebellions in Asia. In one of his last writings, drafted in March 1923, ' Better less but better ', Lenin had suggested that the characteristic feature of the epoch was the combination of the exploitation of Asia with the exploitation of Germany by the victorious Western imperialists. From there it was a short step to apply the theories elaborated for the national struggle of the Asian countries to Germany, in its special post-1918 situation. The alliance of the workers of the West with the nationalism of the East might be paralleled by the alliance of the German Communist party with the revolutionary nationalism of the young German intelligentsia and petty-bourgeoisie. Nationalism might prove the road to revolution.

The invasion of the Ruhr by the French in January 1923 and the proclamation of passive resistance by the right-wing German government created a situation in which Radek, the intellectual director of German communism, began to revise his views on the role of revolutionary nationalism and the potentialities of a national-bolshevist approach to the young nationalist generation.

The necessary theoretical justification for the new approach was provided by interpreting German resistance to France in the Ruhr conflict as the resistance of a colonial, exploited country to an imperialist aggressor. ' During the war, a French defeat was not an aim of German communism; in the Ruhr conflict it is ', declared Thalheimer,[8] contending that the failure of the 1918 revolution had forced Cuno and Stinnes to play the part which should have been played by German socialism. Conditions had turned the German bourgeoisie into an agent of disintegration in relation to the Versailles system. But, like every bourgeoisie to whom the communists assign a revolutionary role, the German bourgeoisie did

[8] *Die Internationale*, February 1923, p. 129.

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not come up to expectations. According to Thalheimer, the Communist party's task was to 'overtake' the bourgeoisie in its struggle against France, assume the leadership in that struggle, and win victory. 'The nation is disintegrating; the inheritance of the German working-class created by the toil of generations is threatened by the jackboots of French soldiers, and by the cowardly weakness of the German bourgeoisie. Only the working-class can save the nation', declared the *Rote Fahne*.

The German Communist party was at that time divided into two wings, the dominant right wing, led by Radek, Brandler, and Thalheimer, was particularly anxious to raise the national issue. When the delegates of the two factions were called to Moscow at the end of April 1923, the Comintern leadership endorsed the new appeal to nationalism. The resolution adopted stated that the German bourgeoisie could no longer be a standard-bearer in the struggle for liberation; the nationalist sentiments unleashed by them would in the end be turned against the ruling classes. The KPD should endeavour to open the eyes of the nationalist petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia to the fact that only a victorious communist revolution could save the German nation.[9] In the *Rote Fahne* (29 May 1923) the conservative government was denounced as a 'government of national shame'. This was exactly the kind of invective hurled at the same government by the revolutionary nationalists. In attacking the government for its lack of energy in its fight against Poincaré, communists and revolutionary nationalists met on common ground. In May 1923 the KPD central committee adopted a resolution drafted by Radek which suggested that the nationalist masses should be regarded as potential recruits for communism.

At the end of May an opportunity arose to launch this new line in a spectacular manner. In November 1922 a young nationalist, Schlageter, had heard Hitler speak in Munich. Carried away by Hitler's eloquence, he had gone to East Prussia to form a local branch of the Nazi party. From there he had hurried to the Ruhr when the French marched in, to take part in the 'war in the dark', to blow up bridges, derail trains, and carry out other acts of sabotage. He was caught by the occupation forces and executed by a French firing squad. A cry of horror went up in German patriotic circles. Schlageter was to become a great figure in the nazi martyrology. Among his pall-bearers in 1923 were men destined to hold high office in Hitler's Reich, such as Kaufmann and Erich Koch, the future Gauleiters of Hamburg and of East Prussia. In May 1933, on the tenth anniversary of Schlageter's execution, a Schlageter monument was unveiled by Goering, who praised him as 'the first soldier of the Third Reich'. In 1933 a play about Schlageter by Hanns Johst, the nazi poet laureate, was shown in all German theatres.

[9] Comintern resolution of April 1923, quoted in J. Degras, ed., *The Communist International*, vol. 2 (London, 1960), p. 20.

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SINCE, to the average German in 1923, nationalists and communists seemed deadly enemies, advocating rival conceptions bound to clash in irreconcilable political struggle, it created a political sensation when a leading communist spoke a few weeks after Schlageter's death of 'this courageous soldier of the counter-revolution'. This famous 'Schlageter speech' was made in Moscow in June 1923 by Karl Radek. No longer did he reject the label of national-bolshevism; no longer was there any weighing of the relative importance of national liberation and communist revolution; the only reason Radek put forward for his new approach to national-bolshevism was the shift in the balance of power in favour of German communism since 1919.[10] Radek did not believe in the immediate struggle for power in Germany; he seems to have envisaged the possibility of a party truce in favour of a common struggle against France, Germany being backed by Russia. In the meantime the rise of revolutionary nationalism appeared as an anti-bourgeois revolt of uprooted masses who, by skilful propaganda, might be won over to communism. This propaganda, however, bore exactly the same features as Radek himself had condemned in 1919, the attempt to put communism across to the petty-bourgeoisie by displaying it as a means to an end, in this case to shake off 'the fetters of Versailles'. He accused the traditional ruling classes of having failed in their national task; they had allowed the 'German people to become a mass of cultural manure for the bourgeoisie of alien nations'.[11] 'Once the cause of the people has become the cause of the nation, the cause of the nation will become the cause of the people'. This style, characteristic of the Schlageter speech, showed yet another feature of national-bolshevism, the broadening of the term 'class' to the terms 'nation' and 'people'. Following the example of Eltzbacher, Laufenberg, and Wolffheim, Radek appealed to the traditions of the Napoleonic wars. In 1813 only the abolition of serfdom had made it possible to arouse the peasant masses against the French oppressors; in 1923 only the abolition of capitalism would mobilise the German workers against the same enemy. Turning sharply against the social-democrats, Radek emphasised the possibility of an armed struggle against the West. 'Pacifist phrases used by leaders of an oppressed people are cowardice and mendacity, repulsive to all healthy instincts'. At the end of June, the *Rote Fahne* published Radek's Moscow speech in a prominent position.

It should be made clear that it would be incorrect to talk of a nazi-communist alliance in 1923. There was one political group which deliberately stood outside the united German front in the Ruhr—Hitler's party. Hitler declared that the main enemies were not the French but the Weimar traitors. No less hostile to the French than the rest, the nazis

[10] *Internationale Press-Korrespondenz* (*Inprekorr*), 21 June 1923, p. 869.

[11] *Schlageter, eine Auseinandersetzung* (Berlin, July 1923). The 3rd edition: *Schlageter, Kommunismus und nationale Bewegung* (Berlin, October 1923). Reventlow reprinted his own contributions to the symposium together with additional matter in a pamphlet, *Völkisch-Kommunistiche Einigung?* (Leipzig, 1924).

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still refused to enter a united front with the Weimar parties. Thus the Ruhr episode could form no basis for nazi-communist collaboration. While Radek had refrained from discussing the anti-semitism of the revolutionary nationalists, Alfred Rosenberg came out in no uncertain terms against any idea of nazi-communist fraternisation. Radek's speech, he declared, was a typically Jewish swindle, and many other groups of rabid nationalists took the same view and refused to be drawn. If the Stuttgart nazis held a discussion meeting with communists, it was in defiance of Hitler's instructions.

Moeller van den Bruck, who replied to Radek in the weekly of the young conservatives, *Das Gewissen*, had nothing to do with the nazis. His meeting with Hitler in 1922 had shown him the wide gulf between their views. *Das Gewissen* was published by a group of upper-class intellectuals who believed in an authoritarian corporative state; some of them had a pro-Russian orientation in foreign affairs, as had many other Germans of the right. Reventlow, a rabid anti-semitic nationalist, was well aware that in replying to Radek at all in his obscure little weekly, he was taking up an eccentric position within the nationalist movement. At the time he was not a member of the Nazi party—he joined it in 1927. In 1920 he had spoken out sharply against national-bolshevism, a doctrine in which the national element was bound to be swallowed by the bolshevist element. This had not prevented him from advocating a German attack on Poland to be synchronised with the Russian advance on Warsaw and Lvov in the summer of 1920.

Thus Moeller van den Bruck replied to Radek as a representative of the 'new conservatism' with an Eastern orientation, and Reventlow as an individual whose attitude was not shared by the majority of his fellow nationalists. Although the debate made no impact on the nationalist masses, it was bound to create confusion in the communist camp. In July 1923 Radek's speech, together with the replies by Moeller and Reventlow and a postcript by Paul Frölich (KPD), were published by the communists in a pamphlet entitled *Schlageter, a discussion*; when Reventlow wanted to answer some points raised by Frölich he was, to everybody's amazement, given the opportunity to put his views in an article published in the *Rote Fahne*.

Assimilating communism to the Hamburg national-bolshevik line, Radek argued that by abandoning socialism the German social-democrats had become apostles of national defeat. Their attitude to fascism was a mixture of fear and imbecile brutality, whereas communists and nationalists alike honoured those qualities of heroism and courage which, to Radek's mind, were so conspicuously absent from social-democracy. By adopting the new line, the KPD would be able not only to stem the nationalist wave but to divert it into the proletarian stream. Fascism was nothing but the socialism of the petty bourgeoisie. The Communist party would open its arms to the new recruits whatever their political

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past. 'Even with the people who murdered Liebknecht and Luxemburg we shall make common cause if they join our ranks', wrote the *Rote Fahne* on 18 August 1923.

THE new line encountered some criticism in communist ranks. Some months before the Schlageter speech a leading member of the Sudeten German section of the Czech Communist party, Neurath, had in the Reichenberg *Vorwärts* protested against the policy adopted in the Ruhr conflict. At the Comintern Executive meeting in June 1923, a few days before Radek made his speech, Neurath protested that the policy of the German party was an adaptation of communist ideology to nationalism.[12] Any attempt to compete with nationalism on its own ground would be disastrous. Lenin's advice that a communist Germany should be prepared to accept its own Brest-Litovsk was still valid. Once the communists had taken power the lower middle classes would be only too eager to follow them. Neurath's views were rejected by all the German delegates and Radek said that the new line was not an eccentricity thought up by the Germans, the Comintern shouldered full responsibility for it. Contrasting the 'bad' national-bolshevism of 1919 with the 'good' brand of 1923, Radek ended his remarks with words addressed in a somewhat patronising manner to the weaker brethren across the Rhine. 'The French comrades have got to understand this', he said, implying that criticism of the new policy had been expressed in French communist circles. Indeed, in September 1923 the Swiss communist Humbert-Droz reported to the Comintern authorities that the Schlageter line had caused uneasiness in the French party. Defence of the revolutionary communist fatherland was one thing and easily intelligible, but defence of the present fatherland, in anticipation of the revolution to come, was a bit too subtle for the simple minds of the French workmen.[13] As it happened, this nationalist episode only lasted about two months.

The sudden turn of German communist policy in the autumn of 1923 towards the seizure of power put an end to the national-bolshevist phase. Ironically enough, it was the left wing of German social-democracy, whose pronounced pacifist views Radek had castigated in such harsh terms, that was prepared to form an alliance with the communists against the menace of Bavarian nazism! In 1923 German democracy, threatened by communism and nazism at the same moment, was indeed a candle burning at both ends, as Scheidemann put it, but while it survived the ordeal the national-bolshevist phase of German communism turned out to be an ephemeral episode in the history of the communist movement. The Schlageter line, it cannot be repeated too often, had been based on the assumption that there was no acute revolutionary situation in Germany: once the opposite view was taken, national-bolshevism as an idea

[12] *Inprekorr*, 16 June 1923, p. 898–99.
[13] J. Degras, op. cit. p. 40.

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collapsed. The same Radek who had talked so much about the French threat to German soil, promised, in secret negotiations with the Polish envoy in Moscow, the cession of East Prussia to Poland by a future communist Germany in return for Polish non-intervention against the German revolution.[14] The national-bolshevism of 1923 had given communist propaganda a nationalist flavouring, it had led to a theoretical discussion with one intellectual representative of the new conservatives, and with one nationalist publicist, but it had led nowhere, the discussions had ended inconclusively, nobody had been converted, there had been no political cooperation. At the height of the Schlageter campaign Radek had declared that the main task was still to exert pressure on the social-democratic parties in an effort to drive them to the left. The entire episode, when Reventlow wrote for the *Rote Fahne* and Radek celebrated the memory of Schlageter, assumed in retrospect something of the character of a nightmare, one more lunatic aspect of the general madness of the year 1923. Only at a time when the dollar was worth a thousand million marks could such an unnatural alliance be proposed.

ON the third occasion when the German communists were compelled to come to grips with revolutionary nationalism the situation was more serious, and this time the nationalist forces won and the republic fell. In May 1929, when the nazis first made large electoral gains in Saxony, the KPD, following Comintern instructions, had been pursuing an ultra-leftist line for some time. Denouncing all shades of political opinion outside the orthodox communist camp as fascism, they failed to notice the growing menace of the nazi movement. At the end of 1929 the nazi vote had made a staggering advance in many local elections, but the customary KPD May day manifesto of 1930 had not a word to say about the nazi danger. When, in June, the nazi vote in Saxony trebled compared with the previous year, *Inprekorr* (24 June 1930) wrote: 'We have to admit openly that for a long time we have underestimated the danger of the national-socialist movement'.

At the same time the communist and socialist votes were falling. After the success of both parties in the Reichstag elections of May 1928, the following elections, regional and local, showed a decline, and the trend was continued in November 1929 in the municipal elections in Thuringia, Saxony, and Prussia—staggering advances by the nazis, decline of both social-democrats and communists compared with 1928. The new ultra-left policy of the KPD, imposed not without a struggle by the Comintern, started to show truly disastrous results at the beginning of 1930; in all the spring elections for factory committees the communists suffered heavy defeats compared with the preceding year, which disposes of the legend that the nazis were some sort of 'answer' to the communist menace. The communists were in retreat, not on the offensive, in these months. The resolution of the central committee published in the *Rote*

[14] E. H. Carr, *The Interregnum 1923–1924* (London, 1954), p. 219.

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Fahne of 15 June 1930—at a time when the 1928 Reichstag was still working—showed a sense of genuine bewilderment. The explanation that the nazi successes reflected the 'advance of the revolutionary tide' was too silly to be taken seriously. On the other hand, there was no suggestion in the resolution that the KPD could take the wind out of the nazi sails by claiming a national mission. There was no hint of a Schlageter line.

General elections had been fixed for 14 September 1930. The political atmosphere was electric, all interest concentrated on the amazing new phenomenon, the nazi mass party which had suddenly emerged out of the despised sect of two years before. At this moment, to the general surprise, the Communist party suddenly swung round from its traditional denunciation of the fascist hordes to a policy of wooing the nationalist petty-bourgeois electorate of potential Hitler supporters. On 24 August 1930 the *Rote Fahne* carried on its front page the newly adopted programme of national and social liberation.[15] The origin of the enslavement of the German working class, in a disarmed and isolated Germany, was traced back to the Versailles treaty. The many promises concerning the policy of the future soviet Germany included a solemn pledge that the victorious communists would at once tear up the predatory Versailles treaty and repudiate all reparation payments. Only the hammer of the proletarian dictatorship would be able to break the chains of national oppression. The ruling classes and the social-democrats were accused of having sold the German working class to the foreign imperialists. Social-democracy, the party of the Young plan and of Versailles, was castigated as the agency of French and Polish imperialism.

This programme displayed all the features for which Radek and Thalheimer had attacked Hamburg national-bolshevism in 1919 and 1920 and for which Neurath had criticised Thalheimer and Radek in their turn in 1923. It treated the socialist revolution as a means to the end of national liberation, it openly committed the KPD to an aggressive policy against the West, it was permeated by the assimilation of nazi terminology, and by the spirit of competition with nationalism. No wonder it caused some uneasiness among the communist following; some months later Thaelmann said: 'Sometimes it almost looked as if we were ashamed of our correct policy of national liberation.'[16]

IN the years between 1933 and 1945 German communists were to have plenty of time for rethinking. In 1944 the then leading stalinist Paul Merker wrote: 'The fault of the programme was that it did not reckon enough with the existing possibilities for a peaceful solution of the reparations problem within the democratic framework', thus admitting that the programme ultimately implied the concept of a revolutionary war against the West.[17] Wilhelm Pieck, writing at about the same time,

[15] Reprinted in L. Berthold, *Das Programm der KPD zur nationalen und sozialen Befreiung* (Berlin, 1956).
[16] Ibid. p. 92.
[17] P. Merker, *Deutschland—sein oder nicht sein?* (Mexico, 1944), vol. 1, p. 212.

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thought in retrospect that it had been wrong in the August programme to treat both nazis and social-democrats as equally dangerous enemies, and that the root of the mistake had been the gross under-estimation of the nazi menace. The KPD should have concentrated on the defence of democratic rights, trying to win the social-democrats for the policy of a united front—in short, the whole conception of the programme had been wrong.[18]

In 1930, however, the communists tried to shout down their nazi competitors in the fairground of nationalism by publishing a collection of documents showing the struggle of the KPD against Versailles, the Dawes and Young plans, with the bombastic title *Soviet Germany breaks the fetters of the Young plan*, and by making concessions to anti-semitism. It was pointed out that there was not a single Jew on the central committee, and only one in the parliamentary party. The communist evening paper, *Welt am Abend*, invited Goebbels and Otto Strasser to write for its special discussion supplement. In 1930, Radek's 'honest patriotic masses' were indeed marching again, and Radek himself was there to supply the required optimistic analysis. On 26 September he wrote in *Inprekorr*: 'The victory of the fascists proves how far the discontent with the capitalist system has spread even beyond the ranks of the revolutionary workers.' Remmele, a leading communist, pooled the followers of Hugenberg, Hitler, and Thaelmann into one great anti-western front; 'Of thirty-five million voters, fourteen million voted against Versailles and the Young plan, against the policy of fulfilment'.[19] Following the national-bolshevist pattern of 1919 and 1923, the orientation towards the nationalist middle classes involved the substitution of the term 'working class' by the terms 'people' and 'nation'. At the beginning of 1931 the slogan of the 'people's revolution' became the central watchword. KPD publications teemed with terms such as people's action, people's policy, people's congress, struggle for the unity of the people. Although it had no success whatever in stemming the nazi flood, the new policy of nationalist mimicry captured one well-known adherent to the KPD. The pattern of the 1921 Munich discussions was repeated—individual intellectuals and officers were indeed won over.

In October 1930 three Reichswehr officers had stood trial for organising nazi cells in the Army. Hitler had been called as a witness by the defence, and in a sensational declaration coming hotfoot on his election success, had pledged himself to strive for power by legal means only. In March 1931, one of the three defendants, Lieutenant Richard Scheringer, sentenced to a period of honourable detention in a fortress, was won over by the new nationalist line of the communists and joined them. A Reichswehr officer turning communist was indeed an unusual event, and the communists were not slow in making the most of their sensational catch. A pamphlet *Erwachendes Volk* (Awakening People),[20] consisting

[18] W. Pieck, *Reden und Aufsätze* (Berlin, 1952), vol. 1, p. 396.
[19] *Internationale*, 1930, No. 18.
[20] *Erwachendes Volk*, Berlin, 1931.

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of letters addressed to Scheringer after his conversion and of his replies, sold 180,000 copies. Scheringer wrote as a convinced nationalist preaching revolutionary war against the West, evoking the spirit of 1914. During the war, at Langemarck, units consisting of German students had captured some enemy ground in a heroic attack, suffering appalling casualties. This episode had become part of the tradition of German nationalism. Scheringer maintained that the only party in whom the spirit of Langemarck was alive were the communists. Following his example several former nazis, free-corps leaders and former officers, proclaimed their adherence to the communist party. A special journal, *Aufbruch*, was founded to give the national-bolshevist views of Scheringer publicity. In the first issue of July 1931 the communist writer Kurella, who had taken an active part in Scheringer's conversion, wrote: 'For innumerable honest revolutionaries, the traditional attitude of communism to the national question is the last but at the same time the most difficult obstacle which makes them hesitate to join the revolutionary workers' movement'.

For some time Beppo Römer, of the Munich discussions of 1921, was editor of *Aufbruch*. He joined the Communist party in 1932—during the war he was to lead a resistance group and to perish as a victim of Hitler. Some other members of the *Aufbruch* circle and of related groups have survived to hold important positions in the cultural life of East Germany today, such as Bodo Uhse and Vilmos Korn. Scheringer himself was tried again in 1932, this time for communist propaganda, and sentenced to another term of detention. A Scheringer committee, consisting of members of the 'national-revolutionary' groups, communists, and prominent authors was formed to agitate for his release. In 1959 Scheringer's autobiography, *Das grosse Los*, was published in West Germany. He had been released in 1934 and resumed political activity in 1945. At the time the Communist party was banned in West Germany, in 1956, he was chairman of its Bavarian section. After his release he had met Reventlow, who was then dissatisfied with Hitler and willing to cooperate with the communists if they adhered to the programme of August 1930. Scheringer had joined up in the war, which to him seemed the dreamed-of alliance between nationalism and communism against Versailles, capitalism, and national oppression. In 1959 he thought this an incorrect judgment.

Others associated with the small intellectual groups which called themselves 'national-revolutionary', took an active part in the Resistance during the war, and by this time had shifted definitely into the communist camp. Such were Harro Schulze-Boysen, editor of *Der Gegner* (1932–33), to which Ernst Jünger, Ernst von Salomon, as well as communist writers used to contribute; after the outbreak of war in 1939 he established a resistance group, *Rote Kapelle*, which after 1941 worked for Russia. To this group belonged his friend Kuckhoff, formerly editor of the well-known 'young conservative' journal *Die Tat*. Schulze-Boysen and Kuckhoff were executed under Hitler. Kuckhoff's widow, Greta

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Kuckhoff, was from 1950–58 president of the State bank of east Germany. The best-known exponent of national-revolutionary ideology, interested in an Eastern orientation and economic planning, Ernst Niekisch, was sentenced to penal servitude by Hitler—Scheringer appearing as a witness at the trial. He now lives as a professor emeritus in West Berlin.

There were several such national-revolutionary groups which dreamed of a synthesis between nationalism and communism, inspired by the ideology of the youth movement. Memories of the earlier phase of national-bolshevism were revived. When Laufenberg died in 1932, Ernst Niekisch wrote in glowing terms of his services to the national-bolshevist cause in his periodical *Widerstand* (Resistance). Fritz Wolffheim, often under the name of F. Wulf, contributed to the journals of the national revolutionaries, many of them edited by K. O. Paetel. Wolffheim was to become a victim of Hitler and to die in a concentration camp. Paetel, in his journal *Sozialistische Nation*, reprinted Radek's Schlageter speech of 1923 and, as Moeller van den Bruck's articles were all republished in these years, the new generation could study the Schlageter discussion again. Niekisch tells us in his recently published autobiography of his contacts with Beppo Römer and Hans von Hentig, who had both been involved in the Munich national-bolshevist episode of 1921.[21] Even Reventlow, by then a nazi elder statesman, reminisced about his discussions with Radek in *Die Tat*.

IMMEDIATELY after the September 1930 elections, the nationalists suggested that in Prussia, too, elections ought to be held to bring the greatest *Land* into line with the Reich. Prussia had been governed for many years by a coalition government led by the social-democrats. According to the constitution, it was possible to force a dissolution by a referendum carried out in two stages. In the first stage 10 per cent of the electorate had to express their desire that a referendum should be held, and when this hurdle had been taken, the referendum itself would take place. On 15 October 1930 the communist speaker in the Prussian Diet stated his party's position on the referendum which was being canvassed by nazis and nationalists. 'This move of the nazis has the sole aim of preparing the ground for the establishment of a fascist dictatorship. We communists refuse to be partners in this deception.' In April 1931 the German communists claimed that it was because of their propaganda—'Not one worker's vote for the fascist referendum'—that the response to the first stage of the referendum campaign among the working class had been so small.[22] But the vote for the referendum had been large enough, and it was fixed for 9 August 1931. If successful, it would be followed by new elections in Prussia, in which a large increase in the nazi vote was expected, and by the resignation of the coalition government—a further stage in the disintegration of Weimar democracy.

[21] E. Niekisch, *Gewagtes Leben* (Frankfurt, 1958).
[22] *Inprekorr*, 28 April 1931, p. 961.

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At the end of July 1931, to the astonishment of its members, the KPD made a completely unexpected volte-face and presented an ultimatum to the Prussian government demanding that the ban on its para-military organisation, the Red Front Fighters League, be lifted. In case of a refusal, they declared, they would vote with Hitler, Hugenberg, and the 'Steel helmets' in the referendum against the government! The ultimatum was rejected and the remaining weeks until 9 August were spent by the KPD in feverish propaganda for the 'Red Referendum'.

The type of propaganda used was exemplified on 1 August in *Fanfare*, a communist journal devoted to the battle against the nazis. Its front page displayed a large portrait of Scheringer and underneath the Lieutenant's words, 'Whoever opposes the people's revolution and the revolutionary war of liberation, betrays the cause of the fallen who in the last war gave their lives for a free Germany'. On 9 August 1931 nine million votes (37 per cent of the electorate) were cast, the bulk obviously supplied by nazis, nationalists, and steel helmets. Triumphantly the *Rote Fahne* on 25 August declared: 'Ten million working Prussians declared war on the capitalist system on this day'. While the followers of Hitler and Hugenberg were thus once more lumped together with the communists in the anti-capitalist and anti-Versailles front, the effect on the social-democratic masses was shrugged off. 'The Communist party had to put up with a temporary short-term estrangement from some sections of the social-democratic working class', stated the *Communist International* on 30 September 1931. In the working-class districts of Berlin, normally communist strongholds, the referendum was a failure. The communist voters refused to follow their leaders and stayed at home.

Even in 1931 it was assumed that this particular action had been imposed on a reluctant leadership by Moscow. The communist daily of East Prussia had appealed to the workers to boycott the fascist referendum, although the new line had already been announced in the *Rote Fahne*. One year later, in September 1932, at a meeting in Moscow of the Comintern Executive, Piatnitsky let the cat out of the bag. He sang a hymn of praise to the exemplary discipline of the German party, which at Moscow's behest would today swing its masses into action for a policy which was the opposite of that adopted yesterday. 'The leadership of the party opposed taking part in the referendum, and a number of party papers had leading articles opposing participation. But when the central committee of the party jointly with the Comintern arrived at the conclusion that it was necessary to take an active part in the referendum, the German comrades in the course of a few days roused the whole party. Not a single party, except the Soviet Communist party, could do that. This shows that the German Communist party is able to manoeuvre.' This made it absolutely clear that the policy of cooperating with the nazis in a major political campaign against the social-democrats had been forced on the German communists by the Russians. Piatnitsky went back to 1929, when there had been a social-democratic

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Reich government and the Young plan had been negotiated by Stresemann. Then, in the autumn of 1929, Hugenberg and Hitler had launched a referendum against the Young plan. In those benighted days before national-bolshevism had become fashionable, it had never occurred to the communists to ally themselves with nationalists and nazis against the social-democrats. In 1929 this would have been quite inconceivable. Piatnitsky found this extremely shortsighted. 'The fascists, in the manner of demagogues, opposed the Young plan, and the only thing we did was to call on our comrades to beat up the fascists. Could the petty-bourgeoisie be expected to understand this in any other way than that we were champions of the Young plan? . . . The victory of the nazis in 1930 can be partly explained by this mistake. If our party, assisted by the Comintern, had not proclaimed its programme of national and social liberation, it would not have got so many votes.' [23]

WHILE no clear answer can be given as to the true motives of the policy of the Red Referendum, it is clear that it cannot claim to have been inspired by considerations of international socialism, although it may have made some sense in terms of Soviet foreign policy. In the case of the German Communist party, manoeuvring against the background of the German political scene, it made no sense whatsoever. It has been universally condemned as an act of criminal folly. The general impression created by the communist move was that the party's dearest wish was to get the nazis into power as soon as possible. Boastful utterances proclaiming that a Hitler dictatorship was bound to be quickly followed by the victory of the communists gave rise to the idea that the KPD considered a Hitler episode to be an inevitable interlude between Weimar democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat.[24] That KPD propaganda gave this impression at the time is admitted by communist authors writing today.

In September 1931 the official monthly of the KPD, *Propagandist*, formulated the theory justifying the adventure: 'A social-democratic coalition government, confronted by a proletariat that is disunited, confused, and unable to struggle, would be a thousand times greater evil than an openly fascist dictatorship confronted by a class-conscious united people determined to fight.' Although this statement (which even now makes one gasp) was to be disowned a few months later, the real damage had been done by the mere fact of participation in the referendum with Hitler.

So great was the nazi menace, however, that three months after the referendum Breitscheid, a leading social-democrat, went out of his way in a speech in November 1931 to offer a united front against the nazis

[23] O. Piatnitsky, *The work of the Communist parties of France and Germany* (XII Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, September 1932) (London, 1932), pp. 24–25, 29.

[24] K. Radek, *Inprekorr*, 20 September 1930, p. 2006; H. Remmele, *Rote Fahne*, 16 October 1931, reprinted in *Inprekorr*, 20 October 1931, p. 2251.

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to the communists. The offer was contemptuously rejected. 'Brüning fascism is no whit better than Hitler fascism', was the comment of the *Rote Fahne* of 14 November 1931. There were obviously divided opinions among the communist leaders at the time, for at the end of 1931 the slogan 'people's revolution', ushered in as the central slogan with a great fanfare at the beginning of the year, was quietly dropped. But hopes of any serious reorientation towards a genuine defence of democracy were to prove unfounded.

IN March and April 1932 important elections were due, those for the President of the Reich and for new diets in many of the *Länder*, particularly in Prussia. In February 1932 the KPD central committee went out of its way to make yet another attempt to whip up nationalist passions by issuing a long declaration against the 'tribute slavery' imposed on Germany by Versailles (*Rote Fahne*, 14 March 1932). Here the national-bolshevist line reached a new peak. The social-democrats were attacked in the same breath as being both chauvinists and lick-spittles of the Entente. The nazi term 'tribute'—instead of 'reparations'—figured prominently in the heading. Hitler and the social-democrats were branded as agents of the Versailles imperialists. The social-democrats, it was stated, had delivered Germans into the hands of Pilsudski, and, of course, the Second International as a whole figured again as an agency of French imperialism. As the communists were utterly incapable of understanding the nature of the nazi movement, grotesque statements turn up, such as 'Hugenberg and his nazi following'. On 13 March 1932 Hitler was to poll more than four times the number of votes cast for Hugenberg's candidate. In 1930 the Nazi party aims had been equally blindly defined as those of a traditional conservative movement—the re-establishment of the regime of Junkers and officers, the reinstatement of all the monarchs and princes! In 1932 the Nazi party was treated as a tool of Hugenberg! The March declaration of 1932 was the last desperate effort to break the nazi wave by imitating its line, in the hope of bringing potential nazi voters into the communist camp. What in fact happened was the exact opposite.

At the elections in spring 1932, in March and April for the President, and at the end of April for the diets of Prussia and other *Länder*, the communists suffered their most serious electoral defeat for years. Since September 1930 the number of unemployed had risen to six million, yet the communist vote increased only from 13·1 per cent of the total in September 1930 to 13·2 per cent in March 1932, while at the second vote in the presidential elections in April 1932 it declined to 10·2 per cent. The special character of the presidential elections could not be advanced to explain these results, for in the elections for the Prussian and other diets at the end of April the communist vote again fell steeply compared with the results of 1930.

In 1930 the communists had polled in the elections to the five diets of Prussia, Bavaria, Württemberg, Hamburg, and Anhalt a total of 3,655,000

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votes; now, after eighteen months of unprecedented political and economic crisis and staggering gains by the nazis, they received 3,336,000 votes; in Prussia their vote fell from 3,140,000 to 2,820,000, and the fall was particularly marked in communist strongholds such as Berlin, Merseburg, Düsseldorf, and Hamburg. Compared with the results of the presidential elections of 13 March in these five regions, the communist vote declined from 3,883,000 to 3,336,000, a loss of more than half a million within six weeks. Hitherto the working-class parties had been proud of the fact that the nazis had never been able to make inroads into their voters' bloc. After months of nationalist propaganda by the communists who argued that a Hitler victory would accelerate a communist triumph, at least half a million usually communist followers voted nazi. Instead of stemming the nazi flood by the adoption of nationalist propaganda, the national-bolshevist line had only strengthened the nazis at the expense of the communists. In August 1932 Thaelmann, discussing the elections of the previous month, was to define the results in the following terms, 'The communist party regained the working class votes which in Spring had been temporarily captured by the nazis', and a little earlier he had admitted, very much in the mood of the sorcerer's apprentice, that the tendency to vote nazi in order to speed up a communist victory had been the result of previous communist tactics. 'The emergence of such dangerous moods on such a big scale, among sections of the unemployed, was possible only because our party displayed certain weaknesses in its anti-fascist struggle in the past.' [25]

* * *

In the period of the grand alliance of 1941 to 1945, the August programme of 1930 came in for very severe criticism by leading German communists such as Pieck; with the establishment of the German Democratic Republic, however, the question took on a new aspect. The Socialist Unity party claims to represent the best traditions of the German past and of the German labour movement, and buttresses its propaganda against the West with references to the anti-Versailles policy of the KPD. It is admitted that it took the German communists many years to tackle the national problem, and the claim is made that precisely for this reason the declaration of August 1930 represents a landmark in the history of the party. In one and the same volume of documents of the communist movement from 1918 to 1933 can be found Pieck's bitter criticism of the August Manifesto, and, a few pages farther on, a much later eulogy of the same document, officially endorsed in 1954 by the Socialist Unity party.[26] Thus each period produces its own version of party history. The national-bolshevism of 1930 to 1932, condemned by Pieck in the days of the grand alliance, has again become a glorious page in the history of the movement. In 1956 a 300-page monograph published under the auspices of the Socialist Unity party discusses the August

[25] *Internationale*, July/August 1932, pp. 232, 310.
[26] *Zur Geschichte der KPD*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1955), pp. 292, 451.

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Manifesto with approval and sketches the German communist approach to the national question since 1919. The Schlageter policy of 1923, the Scheringer campaign of 1931, and the Red Referendum receive no mention whatever. The national-bolshevism of the Thaelmann era, however, with these omissions, is praised as the expression of Leninism at its best.[27]

The propaganda of the Socialist Unity party against west Germany is tinged with a strong nationalist flavour. Adenauer is accused of having favoured a separatist policy in 1919, big business of having sabotaged the Ruhr struggle of 1923; Ernst Thaelmann is glorified as a 'hero of the German nation', and the spirit of Tauroggen, where a Prussian general made an agreement with the Russians against France, is invoked as having special reference to the present time.[28] In 1919 and 1923 Eltzbacher, Hentig, Laufenberg, Wolffheim, and Radek recalled the memories of the great Russo-Prussian alliance of 1813 against the West; in the 1960s Field-Marshal Blücher rides again, this time on the postage stamps of the German Democratic Republic.

[27] L. Berthold, op. cit.
[28] *Cf.* G. Hortzschansky, *Der nationale Verrat der deutschen Monopolherren während des Ruhrkampfes 1923* (Berlin, 1961); W. Bartel, *Ein Held der Nation. Aus dem Leben Ernst Thälmanns* (Berlin, 1961).

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Interview with an Ex-Insider, IV

MOSCOW—BERLIN 1933

W. The events of 1932–33 which led directly to Hitler's seizure of power in Germany are now, after almost thirty years, the object of intensive research. The part played in this by the communists is one of the points least elucidated. In fact, the only documents available for this purpose are those published at the time (resolutions of the German CP and the Comintern, speeches of the communist leaders, etc.) which say nothing about what was happening on the inside. In particular, there is practically no personal testimony from the communist viewpoint. What do you think about this?

P. Moscow no doubt has cogent reasons for refraining from opening the archives containing such material. This is a compromise reached by the present party leaders, no longer willing (or able) to answer for the deliberate distortions and historical claptrap that filled the official history of the party in the period of 'Stalin's personality cult'. Accordingly, the only documents and memoirs published are those which substantially support the party line, whilst everything that questions its accuracy (particularly by compromising the reputation of persons held up as ideals to be glorified, or by justifying opinions which, in the light of present political necessities, it is thought necessary to brand as erroneous or harmful) is, now as before, being withheld from publication.

They have their reasons for this. First, the events slip back into the past, and a great deal of what was mishandled or wrongly decided loses topical significance. Secondly, many a false step was compensated for (or its impact lessened) by subsequent events. Thirdly, the number of eye-witnesses and participants is growing steadily smaller, and therefore the chances of raising legends to the level of historical facts, in place of uncomfortable truths, are growing greater.

W. Can you give us an example of a 'legend' which replaced an uncomfortable truth?

P. There is one such example which will take us straight to the heart of the question that started the great theoretical turmoil which in the late twenties and thirties constituted one of the main problems of the communist movement. This was the clarification of the concept of 'fascism' and the countless debates about it in the Communist International and in the leading communist parties; debates about this concept itself and about the practical question of what their attitude to it should be.

The pious legend asserted that the communist parties were always and in all countries the most consistent and most determined opponents of fascism, that the anti-fascist fight was waged under the unflinching leadership of the communist parties, that the very rise of fascism could have been prevented, had the advice of the communists been taken at the right

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time, and so on. The truth, known only too well from their own experience to the communist activists of that time, was quite different: for one thing, it was a fact that fascism came to power in those countries where the labour movement was divided. The first, classic victory of fascism took place in a country where the left wing of the labour movement was particularly strong, and where it was hoped to gain power by forcing a split in social-democracy and by using revolutionary methods. It turned out, however, that the communist movement in Italy was defeated with relative ease by the reactionary forces and, indeed, that Mussolini's success could be traced back to the support he received from a considerable section of the middle classes, scared by the all too radical tactics of the communists. This aspect of the fascist success contradicted the pattern of Russian revolutionary development and made a definition of the concept of fascism very difficult: the new and, in many details, the surprising element in fascism had to be thoroughly understood, and a great many other concepts had to be reassessed.

The unpleasant fact was that during the entire period between the two world wars, not a single fundamental analysis of fascism from a social and political standpoint was ever made, and that the internal discussions about it did not lead to any final conclusion. More important still, and in the event more tragic, was the fact that the practical fight against the danger of fascism in the various countries was not waged by the communists 'in the very front line and with the utmost consistency', as they claimed in their resolutions; on the contrary, communist tactics were in many cases wholly mistaken and did much damage to the anti-fascist cause.

W. But presumably the reasons for the impotence of the individual communist parties and for their failure to halt fascism lay deeper than in the deficient and faulty analysis of the communist leadership. The interesting thing, however, is the way these failures affected the frame of mind of the communists themselves. How did they react?

P. It so happened that I could observe developments in the German CP in those very years—of 1932 and 1933—when fateful decisions had to be made; until the middle of 1932 I was in Berlin, and afterwards in the Comintern *apparat* in Moscow. My work in Berlin, where I arrived in the autumn of 1931 on the instructions of the Comintern executive, was not directly concerned with the affairs of the German Communist party, but inevitably the developments in Germany became time and again the subject of conversation at meetings and talks which I had with individual party leaders—Thaelmann, Flieg, Neumann, Remmele, Münzenberg, Heckert, and others, as well as with leading officials of the Berlin organisation on the one hand, and representatives of the International on the other (especially with Georg Dimitrov, then working in the West European Bureau of the Comintern, specially assigned to Berlin at that time to take charge of the international organisations). To be sure, the views expressed were unofficial, and often not only differed from the speeches made and the resolutions adopted at meetings, but were frequently in

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direct opposition to them. At that time it had already become the custom to speak with one voice, and to adopt resolutions unanimously, without abstentions. But this unanimity did not yet extend to all private conversations. In such conversations, particularly if they were carried on within the intimate circle of the initiated, one often got to hear some astonishing views that clashed strongly with the official line; these were partly outbreaks of genuine indignation and protest about the decisions adopted and the methods used to impose them, and partly careful soundings; in either case, it was taken for granted that these conversations remained confidential and would not be used in debates and discussions at party meetings.

In the early thirties (following the expulsion of the various deviationists, such as the Fischer-Maslow group, the right-wingers, including Brandler and Thalheimer, and the suppression of the so-called conciliation group of Ernst Meyer and Ewert-Dietrich), the atmosphere in Germany was such that public declarations of loyalty and conformity to the party line were sufficient to guard the leading party workers against reprisals, and ' private opinions ' were tolerated in practice (provided that they had not been brought to the knowledge of a party authority as ' disguised opposition propaganda ').

The personal aspect, moreover, played an important role here: since the failures of the party could not be cast in the teeth of the central committee as such (and certainly not of the Moscow leadership), the leaders were always in a state of feverish anxiety as to which of them would be made the scapegoat, should it be necessary to find one.

W. Were there also differences of opinion and criticisms among the higher authorities and especially in the Comintern apparatus?

P. To my great astonishment—yes. I even found that in the Comintern apparatus and its policy-making bodies such as the political secretariat, the critical mood which I had encountered among the German party leaders was expressed much more widely and in a sharper form. On the other hand, in the course of my work in the Comintern in 1932 and 1933, I saw that criticism of the party line had not only greatly affected the members of these bodies, but also emanated from them. This was the result of the growing irresolution and helplessness of the Comintern at the time immediately preceding Hitler's seizure of power. At this time, when I could no longer observe events in Germany and in the German CP directly, but so to speak ' from above ', it also became clear to me that the pressure exerted on the leaders of the German CP ' from outside ', which was responsible for its erroneous tactics and had fatal consequences, was itself the inevitable outcome of the position in which the Comintern—the entire leadership of the communist movement—found itself.

W. Is there some connection between the reprisals against a large part of the people entrusted, in 1932–33, with carrying out Stalin's directives (both in theory and practice), and the latent opposition to these false tactics and, as a corollary, to the ' personality cult of Stalin '?

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P. I had the opportunity of seeing the sequel to these false tactics of 1932–33 in the prisons and labour camps of the USSR during the second half of the thirties. This was a peculiar addition to my experiences in Berlin and Moscow. In this third period of my observations I had a series of meetings with leading German comrades I had known previously, and also with earlier acquaintances from the Comintern who had helped to draw up and carry out the resolutions on tactics in those years. I was thus able to reconstruct individual episodes, and to form, from these and from other accounts which supplemented my own knowledge, a comprehensive picture of how it was that the German communists in the thirties pursued the mistaken policy they did, and why the German working class, unprepared and disorientated, could not offer any organised and effective resistance to the wave of Hitlerism.

W. What—according to your observations—was the gravest mistake of the German communists during the years of the pre-Hitler crisis?

P. The chief problem facing the German communists after the tremendous success of the nazis in the 1930 elections, was the complete change in the mood of the masses: they were obviously turning away from the Weimar Republic and the parties supporting it, and this was taken by the leaders of the KPD as a sign that the ' revolutionary crisis ', in which the communists would be faced with the task of seizing state power, was to be expected. The communists, however, were neither prepared for nor capable of waging a fight for power. Hence, in fact, there was only one choice before them: either to support the continued existence of the Weimar Republic which, while offering them limited prospects, would nevertheless allow them a wide range of activity, or to collaborate in overthrowing it, which, in the situation that had arisen in the thirties, would fling the doors wide open to a national-socialist government.

That the German party leaders were clear about this even in 1931, I could conclude from my conversations with Remmele, and Heinz Neumann, and from the views expressed by Thaelmann and his closest friends, who had made the subsequent activities of the party dependent on the answer to the question whether the nazis should or should not be ' let in '.

Even at that early stage it was clear that there was only one way of ' not letting in ' the nazis: to form a united front of all anti-fascist elements, above all, of the communists and social-democrats. Proposals for establishing such a united front cropped up, in various forms, time and again. However, the gulf between the two parties was at that time unbridgeable: the social-democrats were deeply embittered by the unending and virulent communist attacks, and the leaders of the SPD were convinced that if their coalition with the middle-class parties (above all, the Catholic centre) were to break down, this would accelerate the triumph of the national-socialists and bring about the swift end of the Weimar Republic. So they rejected even the thought of combined action with the communists, and their attitude served to confirm the basic communist line which, under the slogan of ' class against class ', called for

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mobilisation of the masses against social-democracy as the chief enemy and the Weimar Republic as the main evil which had to be eliminated.

As the danger of the fascist coup drew nearer, the communists called for a 'united front from below', but this in fact never came into being, for it meant an intensified agitation among the social-democratic workers against their leaders, disruptive work in the social-democratic and trade union organisations, and had as its goal the disintegration of social-democracy from within. It served in effect to prevent unity under the slogan of unity, and only made the struggle between KPD and SPD more bitter.

W. Were the communist leaders aware of the fact that without a united anti-fascist front, the victory of fascism could not be prevented, and did they have an idea how such a united front could be formed?

P. The conclusion reached after a detailed discussion on this subject was expressed by one of the German party leaders in 1932: 'A united front of the workers cannot now be achieved in Germany. Clearly it can come into being only when both parties are forced underground by direct pressure from the fascist dictatorship'. And as early as 1932 the inevitability of a 'temporary' victory of national-socialism in Germany was talked about and preparations were begun for continuing the fight underground. To be sure, they still spoke in public about the revolutionary resistance which the workers under communist leadership would put up against an attempt at a Hitler dictatorship, and the rank and file of the KPD were convinced that the Soviet Union would not quietly accept the triumph of fascism in Germany. I found, in many conversations with workers in Berlin in 1932, that this conviction was widespread, the more so as the ordinary members of the communist cells were unable to find any other explanation for the stubborn drive against agreement with the social-democrats. 'Germany is neither Italy nor Bulgaria', one kept on hearing from communist workers. 'The Soviet Union will not leave us in the lurch.'

Only in a few cases were the higher-ranking officials of the KPD aware of the fact that once Hitler came to power, the prospects of a new revolutionary wave in Germany (and in Europe in general) would be infinitesimal. One of these was Eugen Schönhaar with whom I had been constantly in touch. He was a devoted communist entrusted with many responsible functions, who time and again came up against difficulties in the execution of his work which were to be traced to 'directives from above' and to intrigues between different cliques among the leaders. (He often complained even then about the baleful part played by Walter Ulbricht, who carried decisive weight in the Berlin party secretariat, even though, because of his political limitations, he had little say in the central office.)

Above all, E. S. was concerned about the unreliability of many KPD members who, in the event of a seizure of power by Hitler, would readily

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go over to the SA. He therefore considered the formation of an ' underground organisation ', to be set up should Hitler declare the KPD illegal, wholly unrealistic. Everything, he urged, should be done to prevent the seizure of power by Hitler. Eugen Schönhaar did not emigrate, he was arrested and murdered by Hitler's henchmen in 1933.

W. And after Hitler came to power?

P. There was utter chaos among the communist emigration in Moscow, and on that basis charges and counter-charges multiplied, and these were noted and deliberately stimulated by the NKVD. One after another, the secret units created to continue activities against the nazi regime in Germany, were denounced as ' enemy agencies ' and their leaders (including Kiepenberger) arrested and shot.

The theory which was adopted, after the nazi government had consolidated its position, and there was no longer any hope of Hitler's imminent fall, was brief: the Hitler regime could only be overthrown from the outside, through war with Russia. ' Stalin's brilliant plan ' consisted in increasing the military power of the Soviet Union to enable her not only to defend herself against any intervention, but also to give military support to a German revolution. Therefore the main task of the communist parties in other countries was to form a united front (which later crystalised into the ' popular front ') whose main task would be to gain for the Soviet Union sufficient time to implement its military preparations. It was obvious that the suppression of the internal enemies of the Soviets constituted a major part of the tasks set the German communists in exile. In this way the German emigrés in the Soviet Union were drawn into their own ' self-liquidation '; that is, they had to prove by active co-operation with the secret police that the German emigrés approved of Stalin's ' brilliant plan ' and would help to put it into effect.

W. And what in fact were the chances of Soviet assistance for the communist movement in Germany?

P. In fact, given the direction taken by Soviet policy there was no possibility at all. Practical preparations for the liquidation of the Weimar Republic and the elimination of social-democracy were begun in Germany in the summer of 1932. The dismissal of Brüning by Hindenburg and the deposition, without a fight, of the Prussian government, were regarded in Moscow as harbingers of a military dictatorship which would supplant the feeble Weimar Republic together with its inclination to rely on the Western states. From the standpoint of Soviet foreign policy, this development did not imply any direct danger of war or intervention against the Soviet Union. On the other hand, it was considered a foregone conclusion that even the slightest activity on the part of the Soviet Union in regard to Germany (e.g. the supply of arms or cooperation in organising an underground party apparatus as was still the case in 1923), would at once provoke international complications. The personal intervention of Stalin left no doubt that any interference by the Soviet Union in German internal affairs ' could only be the outcome of provocation, and that the Soviet

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Union was interested in the continuation of normal political and economic relations with Germany'. Thus any hope of Soviet intervention in favour of revolutionary resistance to the Hitler regime had been dashed at the outset. And that put an end to all the revolutionary hopes which for fifteen years (since the German revolution of 1918), had been centred on developments in Germany.

W. How do you explain this volte-face of Stalin's, who must have realised its gravity and its crucial consequences for the development of Europe in the following twenty years?

P. Stalin never presented his real motives fully. Broadly speaking, one can distinguish three groups of reasons which prompted Stalin to treat the German question as he did and to reject any united front with the social-democrats—the only chance of preventing the victory of fascism—and which also explain his passive and punctilious conduct towards the new government in Germany: the internal political situation of the Soviet Union, considerations of Soviet foreign policy, and other motives bearing on his personal power in the party and the state. The most important and decisive reason, however, was the internal situation of the Soviet Union. In 1932, as the crisis in Germany matured, the Soviet Union was paralysed in all her actions by the difficult economic situation in which she found herself and had every reason to fear the worst, should it come to a conflict with the 'capitalist environment'. This difficult economic situation was the result of the 'revolution from above' (the term is Stalin's, taken from the *Short Course on the History of the CPSU*) effected in Soviet agriculture since 1929. This 'revolution from above', in the form of forcible collectivisation, opened a wide gulf between the dictatorship and the peasant masses; its outcome was the permanent agricultural crisis which has persisted for the past thirty years (and no way out of it has yet been found), and the continuous food-supply difficulties. The political consequence, which played itself out on an international scale as well, was the hostile mood of the majority of the Soviet population.

W. Did you yourself see any evidence of this change of mood—and how did the leaders of the CPSU react to it?

P. In 1932, when on Comintern instructions I was transferred from Berlin to Moscow, I was immediately struck by the tremendous change in the mood of the population. The 'economic difficulties' had reached their peak, and the food shortage made itself acutely felt throughout the country and even in Moscow. The mood of the leading party cadres was sombre and, indeed, most pessimistic. Many saw no way out of the terrible poverty which was the lot of the majority. Officially no hint could be given as to how desperate the situation was, and the directives handed out to Soviet newspapers were: 'Nothing is to be reported about the internal situation, all attention must be devoted to the severe depression and famine raging in the capitalist countries, above all in America'. At the same time, the greatest efforts were being made to safeguard the Soviet Union against intervention by the capitalist states. All attention was to be concentrated on agitation against the danger of war.

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An incident which occurred a few months after my arrival in the Soviet Union and after I had taken up my duties in the Comintern, made the whole situation in which the Soviet Union then found herself strikingly clear, and I should like to describe it in some detail as an illustration of the reasons behind the tactics of the Soviet Union on the German question. It happened on the 1st of August. . . .

W. Wasn't that the day which was proclaimed as the 'International Day of Struggle against the Danger of War and Fascism'?

P. Exactly. The defence of the Soviet Union was to be thrust into the limelight. In the Soviet Union, the day was used to mobilise the population. Mass meetings, demonstrations, lectures, etc., were organised throughout the country. Experts on the international situation, wherever possible foreign communists, were called on to act as speakers. The Communist International put its entire machine at the disposal of the campaign. And so I received instructions to appear at one of these mass meetings; I was to speak at Minsk at a meeting of officers of the Soviet frontier troops stationed in the vicinity.

The meeting, attended by several thousand high-ranking officers, gave me the opportunity to judge the quality and mentality of the Soviet regular officers of that period. They were almost all young men of working-class background; only a few were from the intelligentsia. What astonished me was the large number of peasants' sons, and particularly the close ties these officers maintained with their home villages. Before the lecture, I had a brief interview with the representative of the Political Administration of the Army who was in charge of the meeting. His questions revolved around one point: the practical conclusion I intended to draw from my lecture. I told him that I wanted to speak about the international situation in general and about the war plans of the capitalists. He interrupted me with visible uneasiness: '. . . but not about the imminent danger of war?' I replied: 'No, I don't believe such a danger exists', whereupon he breathed a sigh of relief.

As my talk came to an end, after about 40 minutes in which I described the capitalist scheming, the build-up of armaments, the misery of the workers, the unemployment in Germany and the United States, etc., I noticed in the chairman's hands a pile of paper slips containing questions to the speaker from the floor. Most of them carried one single question: 'Do the capitalists (these were sometimes specified as the "Polish shlakhta"—the gentry) want to attack the Soviet Union this very autumn, or next year?' The political commissar did not seem surprised; he whispered a few words to me, and at the end I declared resolutely and unequivocally: 'There will be no war this year!', which refuted a large part of the lecture I had just delivered. The commissar, with a warm farewell handshake, remarked: 'it will be made clear in hundreds of letters from the commanders to their families that there will be no war in the immediate future.' Similar experiences have also been related by speakers at other military units. All together, the economic situation of the Soviet Union and the morale of the Red Army in that

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critical year for Germany were of such a kind that any military engagement was precluded from the outset. And as the German communists themselves had no arms, there was no possibility of successful revolutionary action by the KPD.

W. Well, agreed that the internal predicament of the Soviet Union precluded active support for the German communists. But at the same time Stalin must have realised the danger of a war of aggression against the Soviet Union on the part of a national-socialist Germany, whereas the Weimar Republic did offer a certain guarantee that aggressive policies would not be followed.

P. The foreign policy of the Soviet Union started from the axiom that a clash between the 'two worlds—two systems' was inevitable. They had to prevent this fight from taking the form of aggression against isolated socialist Russia. Hence the task of Soviet foreign policy was to take advantage of any internal dissensions in the capitalist camp and, indeed, to intensify such discords actively wherever possible. The foreign policy of the Soviet Union, therefore, viewed the antagonism between the victorious states of the first world war and defeated Germany as the indispensable condition for the existence of the Soviet Union in the 'capitalist encirclement'. When the outlines of a Franco-German agreement began to take shape in the course of negotiations between Briand and Stresemann, this development gave rise to a veritable panic in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, because such a development might lead to a united European front against the Soviet Union. From this standpoint, the policy of the 'Weimar coalition' (of social-democrats, democrats, and the Catholic centre) was the arch-enemy of Soviet policy. On the other hand, the policy of the nationalist opposition parties (the German nationalists and the national-socialists) constituted a guarantee that a bloc of capitalist states would not be formed. In the early thirties, the view that the capitalist states would seek a way out of the depression by a joint offensive against the Soviet Union was particularly widespread. As the Foreign Affairs Commissariat formulated its tasks, the object was to 'drive a wedge between the capitalist states'. A nationalist government in Germany (supported by the Seeckt-Hammerstein group in the army, with whom direct links had been established since the treaty of Rapallo in 1922) was in the opinion of leading Soviet diplomats stationed in Germany the 'lesser evil' in comparison with a left-wing government capable of forming a European bloc against the Soviet Union. Stalin was convinced that a right-wing government in Germany would turn its attention first of all to 'breaking the fetters of Versailles'. It would take a good deal of time before agreement with the Western states could be reached (based on German hegemony). 'During this interval of time, the Soviet Union would put its political and economic situation on a sufficiently sound basis to be prepared for war.'

W. Did not his virtual consent to Hitler's seizure of power incriminate Stalin too much within the party? How could such tactics be justified before the communist parties of the Soviet Union and Germany?

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P. Had there been even the shadow of 'democratic centralism' in the communist parties at the turn of 1932–33, the unresisting capitulation of the German CP and the passive attitude to the establishment of the Hitler regime would certainly not have been possible. This could be seen not only in the attitude of the party activists but was also made clear to me from the reaction of the party apparatus. The thirties were a period in which the system of 'double-thinking', of 'double-talk', of 'dvurushnichestvo' developed as a mass phenomenon both in the party machine itself and among the leading party officials. The first secretary of the party, Stalin, who was at that time (since the deposition of Bukharin in 1928) the absolute ruler of the Comintern, was undoubtedly aware of their real feelings, and his suspicions were raised to boiling point when he realised that his tactics had made the triumph of fascism possible. He knew the old bolshevist cadres (and the leading men of the German communist movement) too well to believe that they would carry out his instructions with a quiet mind: the fact is that as early as 1932 there existed in the leadership of the KPD as well as in the Comintern machine a marked readiness to set up a 'united front' with the social-democrats which would have prevented the victory of national-socialism. But their timid proposals were not adopted. The influence of Stalin—who held fast to his line, while any criticism of it was instantly branded as 'anti-party heresy', if not as 'provocation by agents of international capitalism'—was decisive, but the very triumph of his tactics (which in practice led to the triumph of Hitler) undermined his authority: and so it came about that the tactics of the Comintern and of the German communists at the time preceding Hitler's seizure of power became a source of disintegration within the Soviet Communist party and, later on, one of the most important reasons which led to the physical liquidation of the old bolshevist cadres.

W. You mean the liquidation of the Central Committee (save for a few exceptions), the extermination of the cadres of the Comintern and of the Bolshevist party, the decimating of the political imigrants in the Soviet Union, in short, the so-called Yezhov period 1936–39?

P. Yes, I am convinced that Hitler's seizure of power and the tactics of the German communists and the Soviet Union in the German question are directly tied up with the triumph of the Stalin 'personality cult', and that the wave of terror against the communists in the Soviet Union is linked with the consequences of the tactics from 1931 to 1933. This was also the conviction of many German and Russian communists whom I met in the prisons and camps of the Soviet Union in the years of terror (thus, e.g. Werner Hirsch, editor of the *Rote Fahne* and close associate of Thaelmann; Willy Leow, the vice-chairman of the *Rot-Frontkämpferbund* and many others).[1]

[1] Most German communists who sought refuge in the Soviet Union were liquidated by the NKVD in the years 1935–39, either shot or tortured to death in labour camps and prisons. Many of them showed great courage and did not break down even under the most cunning of tortures, even though only a few of them understood the reason

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W. What are your own personal recollections of 30 January 1933?

P. On 30 January 1933, I appeared in the late afternoon, as usual, in the offices of the Moscow *Pravda*. (For the past few months—apart from my main job, I had been employed on the staff of this newspaper in its foreign political department and took part in the editorial conferences on topical issues.) I found the members of the staff who were already there in great agitation; the reports from Germany were more than disturbing. The expert on central European affairs thought it more than likely that Hitler's candidature as Chancellor would this time be accepted. The remark: 'Never will the old Field-Marshal entrust the fate of Germany to a corporal' (which had been going round the office for several months as the highest wisdom) had apparently gone sour.

We waited for Knorin to come in. Knorin was one of the editors of *Pravda* and also a member of the Russian central committee, as well as head of the central-European Secretariat of the Communist International; through his direct contact with the then chief editor of *Pravda*, Mekhlis, and with Stalin personally, he was responsible for the political direction of the official CPSU daily.

Knorin arrived late. In contrast to the excitement of the editorial staff, his mood was quiet and collected. He seemed to wish to stress through his demeanour that nothing unusual had happened or was expected. At the very beginning of his brief introductory speech, he emphasised that the paper had to take the lead in fighting the 'panic and hysteria' that had got the upper hand in most Western press organs. It was not to be assumed, Knorin said, that the German bourgeoisie would voluntarily give up even the slightest part of its powers to Hitler. The possibility of a coup by the SA was even less likely. Finally, the *Reichswehr* would in no circumstances put up with a Hitler dictatorship.

The next day *Pravda* printed the report, by its Berlin correspondent, of Hitler's appointment and the formation of the Hitler-Papen-Hugenberg government.

In the first week of February, the subject of our editorial discussions was the imminent disorders in Germany; there was talk about preparations for a large-scale strike movement (others wanted to know about the outbreaks of spontaneous strikes in the important industrial plants of Berlin, Hamburg, and the Ruhr district); an official of the KPD, who had just arrived from Germany, was bombarded with questions; all he could say was that the German proletariat would not put up with a

for the persecution of anti-fascists or grasped Stalin's role in betraying the German working class to Hitler. Willy Leow was arrested in 1937 and, during his interrogation, steadfastly resisted all attempts to force a 'confession' out of him. As he was being dragged from his cell, he caused an uproar throughout the whole prison by proclaiming his innocence in his powerful voice, and—surrounded by guards who in vain tried to silence him—sang the 'International'. Only when the last verse was over was he overpowered and led away.

Werner Hirsch put up a systematic fight. Sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment, even though he declined to make a confession, he was moved from prison to prison, where he carried on his fight by demonstrations and hunger strikes. Eventually he died in the Solovki prison.

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fascist dictatorship. He quoted the message of a group of former members of the *Rot-Front-Kämpferbund*, who had assured him on the eve of his departure: 'Tell the comrades in Moscow: Germany is not Bulgaria!'

The Russian experts on German affairs were the more optimistic the nearer they stood to the top. They did not doubt that the coalition would be of short duration: 'Should Hitler dare to do anything against their will, Hugenberg and Papen, supported by the President and the army, would simply usher him out with a kick'. For there could be no doubt about Hitler's complete dependence on his confederates!

Several weeks went by, and reports of mass reprisals against anti-fascists, persecution of communists, mass arrests, storm-troop excesses, reprisals against the pacifists and social-democrats, multiplied. The talk went round the editorial office that, for most of the radically-minded German workers as well as for many communists, the passivity of the Soviet Union was incomprehensible. The story was told that in one of the ports on the shores of the Baltic, working-class German housewives would stand for hours holding their children in their arms and gazing into the distance—to see if the Soviet fleet was coming to stand by the German worker in his difficult hour. Many German workers, particularly communists, had also expressed the opinion that the Soviet Union, in her own interest, could not tolerate a fascist Germany.

By the end of February it was abundantly clear from the theses written for internal use, that it was useless to count on communist action inside Germany ('the masses would neither understand nor support such action'), or on the USSR making a stand against Hitler. At the same time, however, the Hitler regime was still being assessed as a brief interlude: 'Already the morning star of the German revolution glimmers in the distance', ran the concluding sentence of these theses.

Only in the first half of March and in the weeks following the burning of the Reichstag, after the prohibition of the CP in Germany and the arrest of Thaelmann as well as numerous other leading communists, did the tone begin to change, particularly since all the predictions about strong action by the workers proved to be false.

FORVM

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ALFONS GORBACH/BRUNO PITTERMANN
Wahlen in Österreich

FRIEDRICH TORBERG
Ein Kinderlied in sowjetischen Diensten

MANYA HARARI
Am linken Ufer der Moskwa

GÜNTHER RENNERT
Was wird aus der Oper?

MAX BROD
Ehrenrettung der "Verkauften Braut"

LEOPOLD LINDTBERG
Meine Shakespeare-Inszenierungen

* * * * *

Im Hans Deutsch Verlag, Wien
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VIEWS AND REVIEWS

BRITAIN TODAY IN SOVIET WRITING

Ronald Hingley

AN amusing minor contrast in East-West relations is that between published accounts of visits from one side to the other. Notoriously, Western visitors to Russia come back with widely differing stories, ranging from some which reproduce official Soviet 'hand-out' material verbatim to other reports so relentlessly hostile to the official Soviet point of view that they read like Soviet propaganda turned upside down. But when we look at things the other way about, and ask what sort of impressions Soviet visitors to a Western country try to convey on their return, we find no such wide range of reactions, but rather something approaching uniformity.

In other words there is, as one might have expected, a detailed party line on a 'capitalist' country such as Britain. Whatever the personal reactions of a Soviet visitor may have been during his stay in Britain, this line must be followed if he wants to see his impressions in print after his return to the Soviet Union.

Such homogeneity in Soviet published impressions of Britain does not rob the subject of interest. In the first place, the Soviet image of Britain has not been extensively studied in the West, and it is therefore worth attempting to define the main features of that image. Secondly, it is worth enquiring into the question of how strictly homogeneous it in fact turns out to be on close examination—in other words, what latitude do Soviet reporters on Britain enjoy to express different opinions? Finally, one advantage of the topic is that it is so manageable. If Soviet visitors to Britain all tend to say the same things, we should be able to cope with the main outlines of the subject in a few pages.

Though the present article represents an attempt to reconstruct the Soviet image of Britain as projected by all Soviet publicity media during the last few years, illustrations will be taken mainly from five especially typical recent publications, three of which are works of fiction, while two are (professedly) 'straight'. The material is as follows:

Fiction: Fedor Panferov, *Vo imya molodogo* (*In the Name of the Young*; novel; *Oktyabr*, July, August, 1960).
Daniil Kraminov, *Pasynki Albiona* (*Stepsons of Albion*; novel; *Oktyabr*, January, February, 1962).
Tatyana Tess, *U menya yest znakomye v Anglii* (*I have friends in England*; short story; *Ogonyok*, May, 1961).

Reportage: V. Silantyev, *Fog rasseyivayetsya* (*The Fog disperses*; Moscow, 1961).
S. Utchenko. The chapter on London in his article 'Rome, London, Paris' (*Novy Mir*, January, 1961).

It is to be noted that most of this material, whether labelled fiction or not, is in fact intended as reportage. The two novels each contain a character (Nikolay Korablyov in Panferov's novel; Leonid Yegorshin in

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Kraminov's) who is clearly designed to be understood as a direct mouthpiece of his author in the views which he expresses about Britain.

* * * *

OUR MAIN TOPIC is what these five authorities have to say about life in modern Britain. But before considering that, it is worth thinking briefly about what they, and other Soviet authorities writing about the same subject, do *not* have to say. For it is clear that certain omissions are virtually compulsory. At least it is not easy to call to mind any Soviet publication which has informed its readers that British children can all obtain free schooling; that university students are largely supported by the state or by local authorities, none being debarred from attending a university by poverty; that free medical service and (virtually) free dental treatment is available to all; that local councils operate heavily subsidised housing schemes; that income tax is graduated so that bigger earners pay a higher proportion of their earnings in tax.

Similarly, though there is much reference in Soviet material to British unemployment, there is no mention of the fact that the state pays unemployment benefit. Again, there is much talk of British strikes, but important episodes in British trade union life, notably the recent ballot-rigging scandal in the Electrical Trades Union, go unreported if they defy rewriting to reflect credit on communism. British protests against particularly outstanding instances of Soviet illiberalism (for example, the outcry against the framing and arrest of Pasternak's friend Olga Ivinskaya and her daughter) are also passed over in silence. As these examples show, there are certain rigid conventions to be observed by Soviet writers who wish to draw a picture of British life, whether as part of a novel or as a piece of reportage.

* * * *

IF THERE IS ONE subject above all on which all Soviet authorities on Britain are united, it is strangely enough an unpolitical theme and one on which, especially in the current year, few English readers will wish to disagree with their visitors—the horrors of British weather. Thus hardly has Leonid Yegorshin, hero of *Stepsons of Albion*, stepped off his jet plane from Moscow before he finds himself in the deadly grip of a typical London evening—cold, windy, and wet. 'To one who'd been transported from frosty and sunny Moscow to the slushy streets of a strange city, this evening seemed especially dank; the drizzle was piercing and the wind hostile.' And as soon as the Muscovite visitor has got off the bus which has brought him from the airport, the wind blows his hat into a large puddle. Similarly, Panferov's hero Nikolay Korablyov walks straight off his aeroplane into a 'traditional' (this word, ironically inflected, occurs again and again in Soviet assessments of Britain) British shower. 'Luckily they brought a bus up to the plane, or we'd have got wet through before we reached the airport.'

Another constant theme is, of course, fog, and here one detects a tendency to exaggerate or romanticise, possibly through confusion of visitors' actual experiences on British soil with their memories of Sherlock Holmes. To say that Yegorshin was repelled by the 'showers and fogs' which 'succeeded each other with the regularity of the guard changing at Buckingham Palace' is surely to go too far. Likewise

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Panferov's hero comments: 'On the Island [Britain] there are perpetual fogs and showers which rot wooden [window-] frames and compel the inhabitants of London never to be separated from their umbrellas'. The association of Britain and fogs in the Russian mind is obviously too close to be dispelled by any mere meteorological data. It also gives a convenient image, admittedly somewhat threadbare through over-use, whereby the material fog to be found almost perpetually in our streets is compared with the political fog in the British brain.

A slightly less hackneyed point about our weather is made by Kraminov's hero Yegorshin, who is amusingly satirical at the expense of the inevitable British conversations about the weather, which according to him follow conventions almost Chinese in their severity. This has been said many times before, but compared with the usual ponderous moralising about fog (material and political) the point is made with a comparatively light touch.

* * * *

IT IS NOT ONLY the weather which upsets our Soviet guests. Our capital city would, it seems, be to most of them an abode of desolation even if, *per impossibile*, it should ever be visited by a ray of sunshine. 'What is London, that ferro-concrete heart of Britain?' asks Mr Utchenko. 'London is the largest and most dreary collection of houses in the world. Houses in the centre of the city are a mixture of black and white; soot and fog, eating into the stone, give them this fantastic, half-burnt look.' And Mr Silantyev notes that such historical buildings as St Paul's Cathedral and the British Museum are blacker than soot. Whilst admiring these monuments of antiquity, he also experienced a feeling of shame: 'I wanted to take a rag, roll up my sleeves, and wash off all this dirt. . . . I felt homesick for the noisy streets of Moscow with its clean houses and impetuous tempo of living.'

The adjective which occurs most frequently in Soviet descriptions of London is probably *mrachny* (gloomy). Others are 'business-like', 'lifeless', 'empty' and—especially common—'solid' (*solidny*). The latter occurs in an image of Kraminov's. 'The city was too noisy, monotonous, and boringly business-like. It was somewhat like an elderly man who replaces true efficiency by ostentatious fuss; the city had grown too heavy to keep up with the winds of change [*veyaniya vremeni*] and had become too solid to attract attention to its appearance. Stone three- and four-storey buildings and narrow streets bore witness to the fact that London had changed little in the last hundred years, and its occasional box-like structures of glass and steel looked like bright patches on an old, though still serviceable, piece of clothing.'

This obsession with the idea that London (and Britain in general) is behind the times, representing an old, traditional, dying, way of life contrasted with the bustling and future-orientated Soviet Union, is one of the staple items in Soviet descriptions of Britain. It reminds us that Soviet citizens have often been said to derive their main impressions of present-day England from the novels of Dickens. There is nothing new in that idea, but what is interesting is to find a Soviet citizen complaining that he was constantly accused on British soil of confusing Dickensian and modern England.

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'On my first meeting in a youth club [Silantyev writes] I was asked a question which I was often asked later. "How much has your impression of London changed now that you have come face to face with it and not just met it in the novels of Dickens?"'

Silantyev describes this question as 'carrying a whiff of bourgeois propaganda, which asserts that Soviet people judge England only by the novels of Dickens'. As this comment shows, even Soviet citizens can become irritated by hearing repetitions of the same stereotyped judgment. It is pleasant for those of us who have been subjected to Soviet stereotypes and clichés in quantity to infer that all the suffering is not on one side in this matter. Despite his irritation, Silantyev proceeds to answer the question as to how Dickensian modern England is. He finds on the whole that the Dickensian world does not after all seem so much a part of the 'distant past', when one reads modern reports of tenants being thrown out of their rooms for not paying increased rents, of the spiralling of prices, of the growth in the profits of monopolies, of the idleness and luxury of a small group of rich men and the modest, frugal life of the working people, of the clashes between police and strikers and finally (an episode which would not perhaps have struck the untutored English reader as strikingly Dickensian in flavour) of the dispersal of anti-nuclear demonstrators by the police.

It seems, therefore, that Dickens, like the fog, is an irremovable fixture in the Soviet brain. Even those authorities who do not mention Dickens continually stress the 'old-fashioned' atmosphere which surrounded them in England. 'This old-fashioned quality is found in everything—in the architecture of the houses, in the fireplaces . . . in the roses in men's button-holes in the streets, in the construction of London buses and in the shop windows' (Utchenko). Furthermore, Utchenko complains that British hotel furnishings are old-fashioned and the furniture uncomfortable. This is, of course, often true, but English visitors to Moscow who have sampled the plush draperies and ultra-Victorian decor of such new Soviet hotels as the Ukraina in Moscow may be surprised to find that these features do not always make the Soviet visitor feel immediately at home.

* * * *

AS THE ABOVE example indicates, many of the criticisms of England come under the head of 'mirror-image accusations'—that is, the Soviet visitor finds psychological relief in attacking us for deficiencies which may be even more prevalent in his native country than they are here, but which cannot easily and freely be ventilated in print. This is surely the explanation of the Soviet obsession with modern British building, which (as they continually stress) is *monotonous* in style. So it is, of course, but that this particular feature should be picked out by eyes fresh (if that is the right word) from the endlessly repeated regiments of apparently identical box-like apartment blocks in Moscow suburbs is indeed remarkable. Which is the more horrible sight—a typical modern British housing estate, consisting of the more undistinguished brand of semi-detached dwellings, or a new Soviet suburb? It is impossible to answer this question, but to ask it is at least to reveal that two objects can be very different in appearance whilst remaining almost equally repulsive.

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Never perhaps has 'mirror-image' psychology been carried further than in the attacks levelled in these documents on the British housing situation. In order to show young Leonid Yegorshin (in the novel *Stepsons of Albion*) just how tough the housing position is in Britain, his chief at the Soviet Embassy sends him out to rent a room instead of letting him have a diplomatic apartment. Weeks of beating the pavements convince him that every landlord is a Shylock and he is glad eventually to settle for unsalubrious quarters in 'All Souls Alley', for which he has to pay more than one-third of his total earnings.

Mr Silantyev's real-life experiences were also horrific. He managed to find a flat off the Finchley Road which cost him only a quarter of his earnings, but found himself mucking in with unwanted fellow-lodgers in the shape of cockroaches.

No one would deny that Britain has a housing problem, or that British housing has its seamy side. Nevertheless, our housing conditions are palatial when compared with those of Russia, so that it may seem curious for Soviet commentators on Britain to challenge comparison on what is one of their weakest points. However, it must be remembered that they are writing for a captive audience which has no means of making any direct comparison, though whether even the most ignorant reader of these documents can be persuaded that housing is in shorter supply or more infested with cockroaches in London than in Moscow is a matter for speculation.

* * * *

CLOSELY BOUND UP with housing are the moralisings in which our Soviet authorities indulge about the 'feel' or atmosphere of life in Britain. Here the text is often a saying which is reputedly always on our lips: 'An Englishman's home is his castle'. Almost all Soviet reports of Britain denounce in one way or another what, to many inhabitants of these islands, is among the least uncivilised features of British life—its privacy. Leonid Yegorshin voices this view when he finds that the Soviet Embassy, in which he is to work, is situated in a 'private road' (Kensington Palace Gardens).

'To hell with you', he explodes, presumably apostrophising the British and not his superiors at the Soviet Embassy. 'Private land. Private houses. Private gardens. A private road. All that's lacking is a private sky and a private sun!'

Another character from *Stepsons of Albion*, the struggling radio and television dealer Fred Atkins, makes a typically British speech in this vein when he shows Yegorshin his workshop: 'Of course, it's a small workshop, but it's MY workshop, do you understand? I am it's owner, I possess it—do you understand the meaning of these words?'

In similar vein are the comments of Panferov's character Nikolay Korablyov on an English village to which he is taken by his hosts. 'Everything was green, neat, fenced off. "It's mine—don't touch it", shout the houses with their tiled roofs, the flowers, lawns, and stone walls: "It's mine", shout the faces and eyes of the inhabitants. Everything shouts "It's mine, don't touch, I'm never going away, I don't want to live any differently. Don't touch me. I fear change!" Everything is "bought" and "sold". Everything is "mine". My house, my

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fence, my sheep, cows, bank account . . . even a living trout in a stream is "mine" . . .'

'When you look carefully at the inner world of this village [Panfeorov's hero continues] you will see what passions rage inside it.' This brings us to another staple formula in Soviet descriptions of England—'everything seems quite decorous on the surface, but *when you look carefully* you find that . . . ' Such were the experiences of Leonid ('Call me "Len" ') Yegorshin in the imaginary Hammersmith pub, the Eagle and Mouse, of which he became a regular. At first Len was delighted by the free and easy atmosphere in the public bar, where most people were on Christian name terms and where all the customers seemed like members of one big happy family. However, use of the Marxist dialectic, combined with the Russian passion for 'unmasking', enables Len to penetrate to the horrors which lie concealed beneath this surface idyll.

First, he notices that the barman, Jim, carefully grades the degree of sycophancy in his voice according to the social status of his customers. Then it turns out that a cut-throat commercial war is being fought between two groups of regulars who operate rival greengrocery stores. These are a Jewish family, the Gilberts, on one side, and a villainous individual called 'Chap' Chapman on the other. 'Chap' calls in the local branch of the True Britons, a neo-fascist organisation, to mount a pogrom in All Souls Alley, and the Gilberts find their only true champion in broad-shouldered Will Buxton, the alley communist. In this way things become a little clearer about the real issues which smoulder under the surface decorum of English life. For this is after all a capitalist society in which, according to a much-invoked Soviet saying, man must be 'wolf to man', and everything in Mr Kraminov's novel is ingeniously directed to proving the truth of this.

The picture would not be complete without the 'unmasking' of a British capitalist. A fine example of this occurs in what is, unintentionally, the most comic scene in Kraminov's novel. 'Len' Yegorshin invites a young girl, Babs Apswich, to dine with him in a West End hotel. An attractive but poor girl, who models herself on a well-known French film star, but is simple and decent at heart, Babs (improbably enough) has never been in the West End before. The couple has hardly sat down before a prosperous-looking, bald, elderly man asks her to dance and whirls her off, ponderously 'placing on the girl's slender waist a huge hand covered with hair from nail to sleeve'. When the bald man further presses his attentions on Babs, young Len tells him off: 'you are a fat swine. Go to hell!' Not greatly put out, the tycoon subsides at his table and calls up the head waiter: 'Tell this milksop who I am.' The head waiter crosses over to Len and says:

'Young man, you have insulted a Director of the Midland Bank!'

* * * *

THE *droits de seigneur* arrogated to himself by the Director of the Midland Bank are only one of the many discreditable and degenerate features of British life which the discriminating Soviet visitor can find 'if he penetrates beneath the surface'. Others are the national addiction to television, which is left on all day in the dreary hotel described in

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Tatyana Tess's story, 'I have friends in England'. Then there is Silantyev's discovery that one can not only see 'pornographic cabarets' in London night clubs, but is also expected to stand up and sing 'God save the Queen' when they are finished. However, it is Panferov's Nikolay Korablyov who does the most thorough hatchet job on the seamy sides of Britain. He goes to a sadistic film, *The Vampire*. Then he discovers that book kiosks contain only volumes about murders, robberies, and rapes—'undiluted gangsterism'—and you can't get a volume of Shakespeare or Cronin for love or money. But his supreme emotional experience, as seems to be the general lot of the Soviet visitors to London, is in Hyde Park. Here it is not Speakers' Corner, but that other long-standing British tradition of open-air copulation which attracts his eye. His English host delicately explains that, as a result of the capitalist law of supply and demand, it is possible to purchase the services of a prostitute. 'And are you expected to sing *God save the Queen* afterwards?' asks Korablyov, thus neatly nailing the hypocrisy of British life from the holier-than-thou position of a visitor from a country where prostitution, like begging and tipping, have at least been declared 'unactivities', if not actually done away with.

Many of these criticisms of British life may be well merited, but what is surely exaggerated is the attempt to suggest that British life consists of nothing but reading 'comics', and of watching television, films, and pornographic reviews in the intervals between consorting with prostitutes. This approach reminds one of the attempts of Soviet propaganda to suggest that white Americans spend most of their spare time lynching negroes. No less absurd is the attempt to reveal the political realities behind the facade of British life as consisting of a life-and-death struggle between two totalitarian groups which are in fact only peripheral and of marginal importance in British life—fascists and communists.

* * * *

IT IS PERHAPS worth saying a little more about the 'facade' of tradition with which all Soviet visitors to Britain seem so obsessed and which perhaps reflects on their inept handling by their British hosts. The fact is that our visitors generally seem to be given an overdose of such purely touristic pleasures as watching the changing of the guard. Observing a parade of Horse Guards wearing breastplates and cuirasses and carrying pikes, 'a Sovereign's escort', Nikolay Korablyov comments, 'What use are they, and what are they for? A single machine-gunner could lay them all flat.' The inevitable moralising follows: 'Sometimes it seems that on this island everything has congealed and come to resemble the Queen's Guard.'

Another potent source of moralising about British life is the visit to Madame Tussauds which seems to be obligatory for all visitors. It is here that Tatyana Tess's narrator sees what she takes to be an excessively realistic wax figure of an elderly Englishwoman, which however comes to life. 'Excuse me' said the old lady coldly and arrogantly. 'I am unfortunately alive.'

Also obsessed with Madame Tussauds is Utchenko, who regards the Whitehall-Pall Mall area as a 'sort of open air museum of the greatness of the British Empire—all lifeless and empty.' He found his 'horrors'

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not in the actual Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussauds, but in the world outside, where everyone seemed to be a 'semi-corpse'.

It does seem that there is a kind of routine through which Soviet visitors to London are put and that this includes, in addition to the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace and Madame Tussauds, 'Speaker's Corner' in Hyde Park and, at least for the more privileged guests, Question Time in the House of Commons. One has the impression that the well-meaning British organisers of such tours expect a kind of political miracle to occur. Confronted with the majestic spectacle of democracy in action, scales fall from the Russian visitor's eyes, his jaw drops, and he hastens back to his native land eager to recommend the immediate liquidation of the KGB and the adoption of a multi-party system for elections to the Supreme Soviet. Perhaps this is how he should react, but it is not how he in fact does react.

These visits to Speaker's Corner and Question Time at the House of Commons seem to have exactly the same effect on Soviet visitors as their own counter-measures on home territory—the near-compulsory tours of the Permanent Economic (formerly Agricultural) Exhibition in Moscow and of the Moscow Metro—have on Western visitors. These have probably made about as many converts to communism as Hyde Park has made converts to parliamentary democracy. Perhaps the entertainment offered to Soviet visitors might be varied with advantage, though it is admittedly somewhat difficult to make constructive suggestions as to what to do with these highly peculiar guests.

* * * *

THE SUBJECT OF 'democracy' is one which comes up sooner or later whenever Soviet Russians consider the British scene, and some of their *riper sarcasms are reserved for our pretensions in this sphere.* Utchenko, for example, gives a long catalogue of instances of British backwardness (driving on the left; using miles instead of kilometres; pounds and ounces, and, 'most amusing of all', the coinage, especially that strange concept the guinea). 'All these things [he goes on] may be trifles, even endearing and amusing trifles, but the point is that English democracy itself now looks just as old-fashioned and archaic as these details. What does it actually consist of for the ordinary English citizen? In the fact that he can vote once every five years for a Labour or Conservative candidate? But what about the rest of the time? During the rest of the time he can satisfy himself that the Speaker in Parliament still sits on the Woolsack (sic) or he can go on Sunday to Hyde Park where some pathetic and eccentric personages are orating mainly on religious subjects. . . . What are the traditional bases of British democracy in our time? They are those same details of " peculiar " everyday life as guineas, fireplaces, and driving on the left.'

Tradition does not really seem to be Mr Utchenko's strong suit, and he seems inclined to invent traditions where none exist. Apart from placing the Speaker of the House of Commons on the Woolsack, he has presented Corpus Christi College, Oxford, with a tradition (which, as a member of the College for more than twenty years, I can assure him does not exist) whereby undergraduates make a practice of 'banging spoons on the table' before the beginning of dinner. They do not. But one can scarcely expect clarity of recollection from someone

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who, like Mr Utchenko, visited an Oxford College in order to inform himself on the organisation of British universities in general. No wonder he left our shores in a highly bewildered condition.

If we may now sum up the common features of recent Soviet reports on Britain, we find numerous individual points scored against us from which many British citizens would not dissent. However, many of the black marks which we are awarded (e.g. for poor housing conditions, indifferent hotels, uninteresting food) are discreditable only by much higher standards than those prevailing in communist countries. Most sensitive points of all from the Soviet commentators' angle are the two spheres in which British citizens undoubtedly enjoy enormous superiority over their Soviet opposite numbers—personal freedom and prosperity. It is when discussing these two topics that our Soviet commentators do their slickest and quickest anti-sales-talk about British life.

* * * *

WHAT ABOUT THE differences between our five Soviet accounts? Most innocuous is Tatyana Tess's short story, which deals with the personal tragedy of an elderly Englishwoman and scarcely seems concerned to make points. Most eccentric is Panferov's account, not least because he includes in his novel recognisable caricatures of several actual English people with whom he came in contact during a visit to England made shortly before his novel was written. These caricatures were clearly intended to be recognised by Panferov's victims (apart from other resemblances he gave them names closely resembling the originals). His main English interpreter and guide was even portrayed in a thinly-veiled disguise as an unsuccessful pimp, and it was difficult for those (of whom I was one) who met Mr Panferov during his visit to England to reconcile such examples of discourteousness with what we saw of him during his stay.

At least there are one or two matters of detail on which the different authorities come to different conclusions. Utchenko, for example, does not support the Soviet stereotype of the British as 'morose' (*choporny*), and he praises the businesslike and dignified manners of the British. Nowhere in Western Europe, says he, are bus conductors, lift attendants, and hotel waiters so dignified and independent. Kraminov, by contrast, has all these people with their hands permanently held out for tips.

Of our Soviet authorities it is Kraminov who takes the palm for entertainment value—the episode of the Director of the Midland Bank alone would earn him the prize here. If Silantyev is to gain a medal it must be for systematic distortion—a considerable achievement considering the keen competition put up in this department by the rival authorities. Silantyev uses the tiresome Stalinist cliché whereby the word 'honest' (*chestny*) is applied to those foreign citizens who support the current Soviet political line, whether from conviction, like the 'British Komsomols' to whom he pays tribute, or (at least in some cases) accidentally, like the 'honest' Aldermaston marchers of whom he has much to say. Silantyev's book is lavishly illustrated with drawings of such 'typical' British scenes as a starving mother with child and begging bowl (caption: 'Pliz, mister, pliz'), street musicians and so on, with contrasting sketches of elegant horsemen riding to hounds 'in baronial

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demesnes'. It is true that there are one or two interesting non-political observations about such topics as Young Conservatives, commuting, the washing-up habits of husbands in Russia and Britain, and Silantyev's personal difficulties in washing in a hand basin fitted with a plug (contrast one's own struggle with the plugless basins of Russia). But Silantyev is really the most deplorable and insincere of the five authorities—apart from anything else, he lived here for three years as the first *Komsomolskaya Pravda* correspondent in London and had more time than our other authorities to make his own observations. To a greater extent than any of the other reports discussed, his book represents a deliberate attempt to deceive his Soviet readers rather than the result of deceiving himself. Not that the other works discussed, with the possible exception of Panferov's novel, are exactly the result of muddle-headed innocence.

The trouble with all these reports is that they radiate such an air of insincerity and unreliability even when they speak the truth. Many of their Soviet readers may well come to the wholly erroneous conclusion that life in Britain must be a kind of paradise on earth if it is really necessary to misrepresent it at such length and with such persistency.

TAKING STOCK

John Mander

RECENTLY, young West Germans have been taking a closer look at themselves and their country. Retrospection has become a fashion, even an industry. The past two years alone have seen numerous paperback symposia—*Ich lebe in der Bundesrepublik, Die Alternative, Die Mauer, Berlin und keine Illusion*—in which young, and not so young, *Bundesrepublikaner* took stock of Germany's position in the early sixties. These attempts had a certain symptomatic interest, but the general impression was hardly satisfactory. What was promised was cool assessment and analysis: what was achieved was at best superficial, and at worst solemn, self-pitying, and *pathetisch*. Again, though many hands were at work, the general effect was predictable. In *Die Alternative*, for instance, there was a consensus that the only position for an intellectual is 'on the left' (are there no younger right-wing intellectuals in Germany?). But the authors' enthusiasm for the SPD (Social-Democratic party) was so tepid as to suggest that they were more interested in proclaiming their 'opposition' than in effecting social change. These anthologies may have expressed the feelings of the younger generation, but their sum was intellectually unimpressive. If one were to look for an English equivalent, the comparison would be with that almost forgotten 'angry' anthology *Declaration* rather than with its successor *Conviction*. The reason for their lack of success would seem to have lain, not in individual lack of ability, but in a failure to come to grips with practical politics. Distaste for practical politics is, of course, in the German intellectual tradition. One senses this distaste at the root of a

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great deal of the indignation with conditions in the Federal Republic. It is not a political protest, but a protest against politics. There would seem to be a striking parallel here between the attitude of the younger German intellectuals and the nuclear-disarmers in this country.

At first sight, *Bestandsaufnahme* * might appear a continuation of this series. In fact, it is a different and far more serious enterprise. Though it does not, even in its 600 pages, exhaust its chosen field of study—the evolution of West German society since 1945—it is well provided with the kind of ballast the earlier anthologies lacked. The best essays in *Bestandsaufnahme* are often the least polemical. For anyone seriously interested in the texture and 'quality' of West German society (as native Hoggartry would have it), these essays are required reading.

About one half of the essays fall into this category of the '*sachlich*' and the coolly analytical. It is impossible, of course, to summarise their content in a review of this kind; but it may be worth pointing out those contributions that are particularly informative and enlightening. Here, I would mention Jesco von Puttkamer's interesting account of the inner evolution of the *Bundeswehr* over the past seven years; Hans Schwab-Fehlisch's useful survey of the refugee problem; Carl Amery's brilliant and bitter study, from a liberal Catholic point of view, of the post-war evolution of German Catholicism—a marked contrast to Herr Zahrnt's somewhat doughy survey of German Protestantism in the same period. Illuminating, too, is Rolf Dahrendorf's sketch of the sociological changes that have taken place in Germany since 1945—in which the Federal Republic appears as the belated achievement of that bourgeois democracy Germany failed to become in the nineteenth century. In the essays concerned with cultural and artistic affairs, the polemical accent is sharper; but a good half dozen pieces reach the same level of shrewd, informative, matter-of-fact analysis. I would instance Walter Jens' depressing revelation of the survival of *Deutschtümelei* in school textbooks; Walter Gerlach's account of the relative decline of German science since 1933; Franz Schonauer's survey of 'Literary criticsm and restoration'; Heinz von Cramer's devastating record of the artistic eclipse of the German film.

Not that '*Sachlichkeit*' and a polemical purpose necessarily exclude one another. On the contrary: many of the essays I have instanced are extremely hard-hitting. But it is the careful analysis of facts and figures that gives value to these essays and puts *Bestandsaufnahme* in a different category from *Die Alternative* or *Die Mauer*. Vestigial evidences of these earlier anthologies are, nevertheless, to be found in the present volume, which is introduced and postscripted by Herr Hans Werner Richter. Herr Richter, of course, is the oldest campaigner of them all. A German manifesto without his signature would be like a British one without the names of Mr Victor Gollancz or Canon Collins. And the shrill tones of the professional protestant, noticeable in the introduction, can be traced in perhaps a quarter of the essays. These are also, predictably, the least impressive contributions. I fear that Herr Raddatz' confused *cri de coeur*, '*Die verwaltete Angst: Deutschland ein Plural*', Wolfgang Abendroth's bilious account of the fate of the 'socialist idea' in the Federal Republic (Professor Abendroth, one should know, has recently

* **Bestandsaufnahme**, ed. by Hans Werner Richter.

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been in trouble with the SPD), as well as the ubiquitous Herr Kuby's assault on the evil influences of the mass media, come into this category.

What general pattern emerges? Herr Richter, in his introduction, provides us with one, though it is not clear that it is shared by his contributors. Herr Richter's pattern goes like this: between 1945, the 'year zero', and 1948, the year of the currency reform, great ideas were abroad in the land. Partly in response to the efforts of the occupying powers, and partly in reaction against them, young German intellectuals had worked out the blueprints for a new Germany—a social-democratic, culturally liberal, militarily disengaged society, mediating between Eastern communism and Western democracy. It should be noted that this happy state of affairs, though eloquently recalled by Herr Richter, never existed outside the pages of magazines like *Der Ruf*. Of course, it is easy to make fun of this kind of wishful thinking—forgetting that, for all his political quixotry, Herr Richter has the heart of the matter in him. But it must be said that, potentially at least, Herr Richter's *Legendenbildung* is no less dangerous than the *Dolchstosslegende* of the 1920s. For, if the 1945–48 period is Herr Richter's Garden of Eden, Professor Erhard and Dr Adenauer are his evil angels, barring re-entry with their fiery swords. Any democratic socialist will agree that it was tragic so few of the opportunities for reform available after 1945 were actually realised. And it is true that many of these reforms were blighted by the combined effects of *Wirtschaftswunder* and *Restauration* (the German film is a case in point: up to 1948 it seemed that Germany—including East Germany with her DEFA—might be in for a cinematic revival; after 1948 the rapid commercialisation of the cinema in West Germany knocked the bottom out of this dream). But implicit in Herr Richter's exaltation of this post-war period is, I fear, a preference for its particular mixture of high moral thinking and political irresponsibility. Underlying Herr Richter's approach—and that of some of his contributors—is not so much 'opposition' to politics as played at Bonn as a refusal to accept the facts of political life (above all, the Cold War) that have moulded the Federal Republic since 1948. These facts are distasteful; but they are the framework within which German politicians, and thus German reformers, have to work. To its credit and also, to judge by recent elections in North Rhine-Westphalia, to its profit, the SPD has recognised this since the Godesberg conference and Herr Wehner's Bundestag speech on foreign policy of July 1960. But while it held to Herr Richter's views, the SPD took up a position in regard to the new Republic intellectually similar (though in practice less militant) to that of the German Right in the 1920s. In less settled conditions, the legend of the 'neglected opportunities' (particularly, Stalin's Note of March 1952) might have proved the *Dolchstosslegende* of the Federal Republic.

This 'acceptance', by the main body of the German Left, of the Federal Republic and all its works (rearmament, European integration, etc.) may come to appear the decisive turning point. It already determines, I think, the real pattern detectable in *Bestandsaufnahme* which is not at all that laid down by Herr Richter in his introduction. The pattern is founded on an acceptance of the status quo. But it does not spring, whatever Herr Richter may think, from a mood of resignation or despair. The tone of the best pieces in *Bestandsaufnahme* will not support this.

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Rather, there is an undertone of confidence, a sense that the tests now facing the Federal Republic, though difficult, are not insuperable. One reason for this calmer approach—though it is seldom explicit in the anthology itself—may be that West Germany's problems are no longer unique. They are very like the problems confronting this country, America, or any highly industrialised society. Indeed, most of the demands made in these pages are thoroughly familiar: the number of university places must be radically increased; larger resources must be made available for scientific research; the economy must be placed in a condition to withstand foreign competition—through higher productivity, further rationalisation, anti-inflationary measures, etc. There is little in this that could not have come from the pen of Mr Andrew Shonfield or Sir Charles Snow.

If one side of this 'normalisation' of social and political life is the acceptance of the status quo, the other is the realisation that the *Wirtschaftswunder* is a thing of the past. On this all contributors seem agreed. The fantastic advance of the 1950s was exceptional—though also more normal, less 'miraculous' than was thought at the time. It was a predictable response to exceptional conditions, which are not likely to recur—high demand, low labour costs, large injections of capital, new machinery. Nor can the *Wirtschaftswunder* be thought of as exclusively German—it has, after all, its analogues in Japan, Italy, and France. Growing awareness of this new perspective, indeed, should be another reason for confidence on the Left—if Germany's problems are similar to those of Britain and America, similar solutions should apply. Equally, the German Right can no longer expect to win elections on the strength of the *Wirtschaftswunder* alone. Its intellectual and political confidence, as Adenauer's power declines, is likely to decrease as that of the democratic Left grows stronger.

Few of the contributors to *Bestandsaufnahme*, perhaps, would put the matter as optimistically as that. But the foreign critic of German society will tend to compare what is with what might have been—or with what has been. He is relieved that Germany's problems no longer appear, as between the wars, intractable, unfamiliar, and irrational. The German critic of German society, on the other hand, will compare what is with what should be, and find much lacking. Yet this very readiness to criticise—and to criticise without undue hysteria—is what most impresses the foreign reader of *Bestandsaufnahme*, tending to reinforce his optimism about German development. Of course, this development is not predictable; we do not know what plans Mr Khrushchev may have in store for Berlin, and a serious economic crisis could always upset the reckoning. But if *Bestandsaufnahme* is any guide, it looks as if the 1950s, a decade of fruitless strife in German *Aussenpolitik*, could be succeeded by a decade of fruitful controversy in German *Innenpolitik*. It is, as yet, too early to say. But it may yet appear that Herr Richter, with his romantic nostalgia for the ruins of 1945, is gazing in the wrong direction.

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1941

John Erickson

THE German-Soviet non-aggression Pact of 1939 exploded on the international scene, bringing with its apparent contradiction of principle and obvious perfidy dismay to 'capitalist' and 'communist' alike. The opposites, sworn enemies of many bitter speeches and biting pamphlets, had met. In his lengthy treatment of the politics of this Pact, Dr Fabry * has chosen to treat the long-term origins of this spectacular reconciliation of interests with marked brevity. From the outset, Soviet-German relations had presented Europe with numerous mysteries and irritating contradictions. Rapallo first astonished and then alarmed the Entente. The subsequent Reichswehr-Red Army 'arrangements' had developed as a secret which grew increasingly open as the years of these operations advanced. The fiery heart of the motivation for these illicit military dealings lay in the 'soldier of French imperialism'—Poland, which impinged on Germany and Soviet Russia alike. At the close of this period of extensive military-political collaboration, the Russians asserted that they had offered Germany a non-aggression treaty (a claim which finds no support from the German files themselves). Dr Fabry makes brief mention of the Soviet-German trade agreements of 1935–36 (without referring to the invaluable Schnurre *Nachlass*), but passes over the details of Stalin's attempt to use the channels of trade negotiation in order to offer Hitler a pact in 1937. The prime mover in this private diplomatic plot was David Kandelaki (not Kandeliki, as the author has him); the German files hold the record of these interesting if abortive exchanges. As for the Franco-Soviet Pact, the single link which bound Stalin to the democracies, its metal rusted away with unwonted speed. Seeping out from time to time were rumours of a possible Soviet-German *rapprochement*. The substance was not believed and the very possibility discounted by observers blinded by the ideological smoke-screen; 'nazism' and 'communism' were, by definition, fundamentally irreconcilable. The thunder of public statements attested to this fact; the whisper of attempted bargain, if detected, was ignored. Not all, however, were bemused by the on-stage propagandistic brawl between German nazis and Russian communists. In the year of Munich, M. Coulondre at his ambassadorial post in Moscow emphasised that, for the Russians, Poland was much less a potential battle-front than a possible meeting-ground with Germany. In view of what is demonstrably a murky and disputed diplomatic history, the reader might therefore ask of Dr. Fabry a greater clarification of the possible antecedents of this 'unexpected' Pact, and an estimate of Stalin's 'German policy'. This book is concerned to deal with the characteristics of policy when German revisionism meets Russian expansion; for that reason, ten if not twenty years of varied and complex manoeuvre could with profit be analysed here.

The author, however, moves straightway to the brink of the 1939 precipice. His thesis is that for Hitler, whose operating method it was to concentrate furiously on immediate political solutions with little thought

* Philipp W. Fabry, **Der Hitler-Stalin-Pakt 1939–1941:** Ein Beitrag zur Methode sowjetischer Aussenpolitik (Darmstadt, 1962), 535 pp.

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for the long-term consequences, the Pact was an acceptable resolution of the 'Polish problem.' Once war had broken out, the *Führer* was nonetheless prepared to support the Pact with Stalin, provided that the latter would commit himself to the anti-British path pursued by Germany. It has been generally accepted that Hitler decided on war against Russia in the summer of 1940. This is not so. Only in the final week of November 1940, after the disastrous outcome of the Berlin conference with Molotov, did Hitler make his momentous decision. The Soviet Union had not been drawn into alignment with the inter-continental Axis power bloc. On the contrary; there to the east, aggravating all Hitler's fears, lay Stalin's formidable air and ground forces, fears given substance since Stalin had shown in the autumn of 1940 that he was pursuing territorial aims which were dangerous for Germany. Hitler was, then, bent on war (as the preparation and planning of Operation *Barbarossa* shows). But was not his 'partner', who grabbed and grumbled while Hitler conquered, also a major accessory after the fact of the German attack in June 1941? In short, the menace of Soviet expansion had to be checked by loosing Hitler's 'solution' on Stalin. Thus, while Hitler was openly unscrupulous, Stalin was secretly and even more dangerously so; a glance at Dr Fabry's suggestively 'geo-political' end-paper map shows thin but menacing arrows streaking out from the Moscow region, striking up to a North Atlantic outlet, pressing into the Bukovina, and driving on to the Dardanelles and even the Skagerrak.

GIVEN this thesis, which is supported throughout by a sinuous and complicated argument, the acceptability of the 'Stalin' presented by Dr Fabry must be examined, for the author's 'Hitler' depends to a given degree upon the assessment of the Russian leader and his policy in this comparison of villainies. First, a note on sources. In a work which is sub-titled 'Ein Beitrag zur Methode sowjetischer Aussenpolitik', it is surprising in the extreme to note that not a single Russian work has been cited (with the exception of Colonel Zhilin's symposium on 1941–45, which has been translated into German). The unpublished German material has been drawn from the *Nachlass Greiner*, the Halder Diary, the *Thomasdenkschrift* (on the German war economy), and the Hansen papers. Yet in a study which depends so much on the detail of the planning of operation *Barbarossa*, this reader would have been more reassured to discover extensive use of the five volumes of original material from German military records, the *Chefsachen* of 'Barbarossa Band 1–5'. The resort to the Nuremberg trial materials when discussing Soviet military intentions in 1941 merely echoes a case which G. L. Weinberg, in his study of Soviet-German relations, has thoroughly demolished. The author defends his exclusion of Soviet sources on the ground that there is 'deliberate avoidance' (p. 398) of discussion of Soviet operational grouping and military intentions before June 1941. That this assertion does not correspond with reality can be demonstrated by analysing the scope of Soviet military-political literature after 1956. While there may be no single work in which this information is collected, a survey of the very authoritative and illuminating *Voenno-istoricheskii Zhurnal* (to take but one example, and one which is required reading for analysts of Soviet policy in 1941), would provide extensive coverage of

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Soviet intentions and capacities (covering all arms and all 'fronts'). There is no longer any justification for using only the pre-June calculations of *Fremde Heere Ost*, if what is really required is an objective statement of the Russian and German military postures. The elimination of a significant sector of source material cannot but affect the author's arguments most directly.

The Stalin of this book, as well as the interpretation of Soviet policy as a whole, is the product of examination through the high-powered lens of German documentation. From the outset, Stalin is the *deus ex machina* of 'world revolution', committed to encroaching upon Europe (and thereby treading on Hitler's doorstep); the traditional pattern of Russian expansion could be discerned, but the ultimate aim was world domination. After the Soviet incursions into Finland and the Baltic, and with the Russian menace in the south-east growing to substantial proportions, the warning light flashed finally for the *Führer* after the November (1940) conference, at which Stalin's demands were made plain. And, concludes Dr Fabry, 'in the end, after what we have experienced since the end of the Second World War, Hitler had correctly seen the position' (p. 364). Yet this retrospective emphasis does not wholly dispose of the problem of Soviet policy in 1940–41. The author imparts a logic and coherency to Stalin's policy which is denied by Soviet critics themselves. Over Stalin's handling of and reaction to the Yugoslav crisis in the spring of 1941, Dr Fabry emphasises the threat posed to Germany:

'There can be no doubt' that Stalin was 'ready for any eventuality' —and in particular for that moment when Hitler might well come to grief in a war situation where the United States was a fighting ally of Great Britain. But this is precisely where the doubt lies. Soviet sources have made it plain that Stalin—to the Soviet Union's terrible cost—failed to make any definite strategic provisions. The existence of any time-table or master-plan, even the assumption of the obvious, cannot be taken for granted. In the newly-acquired territories, military works (or, to make full concession to Dr Fabry's argument, potential attack installations) proceeded at a sluggish pace. The economic aid which Stalin lent the German war machine the author acknowledges, but sees in it one more danger to Hitler, for the degree of German dependence upon Soviet supplies could become a further means of Stalin exerting 'massive pressure.' Yet Stalin did not thereby shed all his own vulnerability. Nevertheless, the outcome which this study presupposes was that of a Soviet Union fighting not with but against Germany. The steady Soviet advance to the limits of the German *Machtbereich*, the shadow of Russian air power, merely reinforced Hitler's mounting fears. To complement this estimate of Soviet political purposes, Dr Fabry devotes considerable space to the military aspect in order to demonstrate that Stalin's threat was not an idle one.

In its presentation of the military data, this study once more covers the ground of the 'self-defensive offensive', which was advanced at Nuremberg and there rejected. Dr Fabry produces part of the German military record. It was, however, to be expected that a command committed to an offensive undertaking on the scale of *Barbarossa* should take a cautious and even pessimistic view of Russian military moves.

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Of itself this does not prove the existence of a Russian aggressive intention and capacity.

Only by eliminating evidence from non-German sources can the idea of the relative correctness of Hitler's November decision and the subsequent implementation of the plans to attack Russia be supported. If there were weighty German reservations about the military and political wisdom of *Barbarossa*, there was also no lack of reports which stressed Stalin's desire to avoid a final breach with Hitler. In the captured Soviet documents, which Dr Fabry has chosen not to use, there is neither consistency nor any conclusive evidence that the Soviet programme (military, political, and economic) envisaged war as either a defensive or offensive possibility in 1941.

SOVIET materials, which are not cited here, have recently provided important information on the Soviet military posture in 1940–41. Dr Fabry makes much of the Soviet 'mobilisation' in the spring of 1941 and the threatening aspect of the Soviet concentration on the western frontiers. Although his list of Red Army commands and formations on pages 420–421 reads formidably, the counting of heads does not reveal in what state of efficiency these forces existed. Even after April 1941 these formations lacked, on average, 40 per cent of their strength. Soviet writers maintain that no effective operational grouping had been effected by Chief of Staff Zhukov; that this is not mere exaggeration is borne out by the rapid collapse and impossibility of redeployment after 22 June 1941. The total Soviet strength deployed along this vast frontier in the first echelon amounted to 40 rifle divisions. To neither first nor second echelons had any quantity of modern armour been delivered by May. As for Colonel-General Pavlov's Western command—the menacing aspect of which is emphasised by Dr Fabry—a brief glance at Colonel-General Sandalov's personal notes (printed in *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1961: 3) yields detailed, first-hand information about the combat condition of this Soviet concentration. More than 50 per cent of the personnel of the mechanised corps was untrained. (It is relevant to note that the German tank forces had behind them the battle experience of the recent *blitzkrieg* in western Europe and the Balkans; a Soviet tank driver had had, on average, no more than 1½–2 hours training with his machine.) Pavlov's staffs were not manned. Artillery units had field-guns and howitzers, but no ammunition. Of the armour and motor-transport which was needed for effective operational performance, 75 per cent was missing. (This lack of transport, plus the shortage of fuel, gravely handicapped the Red Army's withdrawal in the 'double battle of Minsk-Bialystok'). Dr Fabry has Pavlov's forces 'exceptionally well-supplied with aircraft' (p. 421). These were mainly obsolete machines deployed on airfields lying dangerously close to the frontier. Pilot-training was far from complete on the small number of new fighter aircraft which had been delivered to the frontier commands. Meanwhile Pavlov's assortment of aircraft was waiting—neither dispersed nor camouflaged—on airfields well pin-pointed by *Luftwaffe* reconnaissance for what turned out to be the fantastic destruction visited upon it in a mere five hours on the morning of 22 June. Nor does Pavlov's air strength appear to have been as numerically formidable as suggested by Dr Fabry. Meanwhile it was on 10 June that Korobkov's 4th Army, an important component of the Western

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command, was assigned to a training programme, which, by a shattering irony, was to begin on 22 June. In all, Sandalov tells a lugubrious tale of inefficiency, short-sightedness, and wishful thinking.

The principal Soviet observations about the causes of the catastrophe of 1941 are that no operational plan existed; no proper signals network had been prepared, no minimum state of operational readiness existed, no strategic plan had been previously elaborated. The first known operational order issued to the Red Army (issued at 7.30 a.m. on 22 June) forbade any crossing of the frontier. The wholly unrealistic series of orders issued by the Soviet General Staff at 10.30 p.m. on the evening of 22 June was nothing but the general plan which was known to General Köstring in 1938, and which even then had been mercilessly criticised by that extremely able officer. Since April 1941 the German concentrations on the Soviet frontiers were fully known to the Soviet command; the May information bulletin of the Soviet General Staff pointed to continued German reinforcement of these troops. Meanwhile Stalin dawdled with his military measures, binding his commanders with the order not to ' provoke ' the Germans. It is certainly surprising to see in this faint response to a known and developing German threat the justification for having made that threat actual and consummating it in one gigantic offensive. It is a circular argument, which depends on the special geometry of its sources. Since the author has sliced away a whole component of source material, for reasons which do not justify the excision, the study hardly serves as an objective record of the Soviet-German crisis. Nor can it serve to illuminate Soviet operational methods, for, in its attempt to establish the long-term justification for Hitler's decision, it relies on generalisations which are not wholly supported by the evidence now available.

The basic problem, which is to explain why Stalin and the men he dominated failed to adhere to what Dr Garthoff has termed their ' own operational requirements ', remains unsolved. A much wider range of source materials, critically examined, could alone ensure the objectivity which is lacking here. It is questionable whether Stalin was preoccupied with that political abstraction, ' world revolution '; what he saw in the arrangement with Hitler was not the royal road to aggrandisement but a short cut (which he had sought even before 1939) to the security which was a condition for the survival of his regime. Certainly the Pact offered an opportunity to indulge in some territorial looting, but this was the price which Hitler had paid. That Hitler found in Stalin a difficult and dangerous partner is not in itself a substantial illumination of the methods of Soviet foreign policy. The very nature of the Pact put a premium on extracting advantage from it. The undoing of Stalin was not that he retained a menacing initiative, as Dr Fabry suggests, but rather that his room for manoeuvre diminished steadily and disastrously; his neglect of elementary precautions merely invited catastrophe. In spite of his sub-title, what Dr Fabry has done is to illustrate the *Führer's* methods; the attack on the Soviet Union is explicable only in terms of Hitler's intentions and not as the consequence of Stalin's ' provocation '. If Stalin sought his own destruction—and the *Wehrmacht* was a very formidable fighting machine, battle-tested and fully mobilised, unlike the Red Army—then one may assume that he did it unwittingly. If retrospective proofs are to be employed, let them be derived from

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Operation *Barbarossa*: a 'mobilised' Red Army caught in the terrible traps of the frontier battles, a 'threatening' Soviet bomber fleet of old machines annihilated while using hopeless tactics, the unplanned withdrawal to defence lines which did not exist, and the permanent confusion of a command which lacked either direction or the mainstay of any plan.

To extract even a grain of honour from the Nazi-Soviet Pact is a formidable labour. Dr Fabry's comparative criminology produces a much-blackened Stalin and a somewhat whitewashed Hitler. If there is 'burning topicality' in this study, it is that preventive war cannot be sustained by citing only the arguments of its instigators.

1939: A GERMAN VIEW

Otto Stenzl

A GLANCE at the historiography of the events preceding the Second World War discloses a remarkable phenomenon. While the two decades after 1918 saw the publication of a substantial number of comprehensive accounts of the origins of the First World War, some of them in several volumes, no even roughly comparable picture emerges for the equivalent period following the Second World War. Detailed accounts are available only in the case of isolated fields such as the Spanish Civil War, the annexation of Austria, the Sudeten crisis, the events leading up to the invasion of Poland, and Russo-German relations. Between these lie yawning gaps, and a comprehensive account of the prior history of the war is totally lacking.

Even *The Origins of the Second World War*, by A. J. P. Taylor, published in German translation a year ago, fails to be and was not intended as an exhaustive examination of sources and events. The book has yet another feature: being a brilliantly written but highly controversial study, it is recommended reading only for those who are already versed in the history of the inter-war period and are capable of distinguishing the author's apt judgments from his over-subtle formulations and fallacies.

Taylor's principal thesis consists in an interpretation of Hitler's foreign policy which pours scorn on all hitherto well-established views of history, and amounts to a palliation—indeed, an exculpation—of Hitler. In Taylor's opinion, Hitler did no more than persevere with his predecessors' foreign policy, that is, he pursued the aim of freeing Germany from the shackles of the Versailles treaty. The generally accepted notion that he planned a major war from the very outset with the intention of gaining world supremacy should, Taylor implies, be consigned to the realm of fantasy. Hitler had no 'grand design'; on the contrary, his policy—like that of the other statesmen—evolved step by step (pp. 68–69), facilitated and even encouraged by the weaknesses and mistakes of his opponents, the statesmen of the West. Thus the latter were just as responsible for the outbreak of war as Hitler himself (p. 103).

If this had really been the case and Hitler had merely followed in Stresemann's footsteps, the Second World War would never have broken out. It is idle to speculate as to which bears more responsibility for

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leading the author to this erroneous conclusion, his penchant for contradicting others or the fact that he has studied British sources better than German.[1] He has obviously failed to read *Mein Kampf* with sufficient care if he states, for instance, that Hitler gave pride of place in it to the overthrow of France and only began to dream of setting up an empire in the East in his *Table Talk* during the war (p. 69). The idea of founding a great empire by the acquisition of territory in the East was already prominent in *Mein Kampf*,[2] and remained Hitler's prime and over-riding objective. Since it amounted to the establishment of hegemony in Europe, it was bound sooner or later to lead to a general conflict.

The controversy over whether or not Hitler 'planned' the war is, in the last analysis, a battle of words. What matters is that he included the risk of war in the expansionist aims which he kept before his eyes. This is clearly shown by his statements to the commanders-in-chief and the Foreign Minister on 5 November 1937, which Taylor wrongly dismisses as 'day-dreaming' (p. 132). The only solution of Germany's problem lay in a resort to force, which was never without attendant risk, Hitler declared at the conference.[3] This is where Hitler's foreign policy differed from that of his predecessors, and this is why it is ludicrous to claim that his own was merely a continuation of theirs. Admittedly, he did not plan each individual expansionary phase in advance. The conference of November 1937 revealed that he was far from clear as to when, in what order, and in what circumstances he would seize possession of Czechoslovakia and Austria, nor—as Taylor himself points out (pp. 109–110)—did he plan either the form or timing of the *Anschluss* with Austria. This is all beside the point, however. What matters is that, as Hitler himself stated, he intended to fulfil these expansionist aims at the first opportunity.

Proceeding from his basic conception, Taylor then gives a bizarre and entirely erroneous picture of the events of the two years immediately preceding the outbreak of war. The Austrian *Anschluss*, which came about earlier than had been envisaged in Berlin because of Schuschnigg's decision to hold a referendum, is taken by Taylor as evidence that Hitler was not himself the aggressor, but had been forced into aggression by events (pp. 149–150). Hitler's belligerent threats against Czechoslovakia were only 'bluff' (p. 167). Even after Munich, Hitler devised no aggressive schemes, merely 'measures of precaution' against an 'anti-German policy' on Czechoslovakia's part (pp. 192–193). No evidence is adduced for Taylor's assertion that Hitler was prepared to forget the Germans in Poland and respect Poland's integrity provided that the latter accepted his demands on Danzig and the corridor and readily joined the German moves against the Soviet Union (p. 194). After the Prague coup, who would have given credence to Hitler's assurances?

In Taylor's view, therefore, the Second World War broke out only because Poland was 'blindly confident' (p. 196) enough to reject German

1 Taylor's book omits to mention most German accounts, either in the text or in the bibliographical appendix. As an example of how closely the author has studied German documents, it may be noted that he consistently refers to the German ambassador in Moscow, von der Schulenberg, whose name is hardly unknown, as 'Schülenberg'.

2 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, unabridged edition in one volume, Munich 1938, Chapter 14.

3 Documents on German foreign policy, Series D, Volume I (Baden-Baden, 1959), p. 29.

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demands, and England maladroit enough to give her carte blanche in the matter of guarantees of support. Hitler, whose original requirements were limited to Danzig and the corridor, saw this as a challenge. He accordingly set out to show that he had 'imposed his will on the British, and on the Poles' (p. 216). A war of nerves became transformed into a real war which neither of the two sides wanted. 'The war of 1939, far from being premeditated, was a mistake, the result on both sides of diplomatic blunders' (p. 219). Significantly, the concluding chapter in Taylor's book is entitled 'War for Danzig'.

This is just not true. Hitler was prepared to dictate, not negotiate. He confronted Poland—like Czechoslovakia in September 1938—with a choice between accepting his demands or rejecting them, clearly revealing how unscrupulously he toyed with the risk of war. The fact that Poland did not accept Hitler's ultimatum-like offer to negotiate on 29 August 1939 cannot—contrary to Taylor's view (pp. 173–74)—be laid at her door. As Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, found, it bore a strong resemblance to Hacha's summons to Berlin. Even Taylor has to admit (p. 276) that the Polish government declared itself ready on 31 August to negotiate free from duress. Hitler would not agree, and gave orders for the opening of hostilities.

THE MANNER IN which Taylor assesses Western policy is equally unsatisfactory. In fact, he condemns it out of hand with a liberal use of irony and sarcasm. On the other hand, he draws an informative picture of Western public opinion, which ultimately determined the policy of Western statesmen. The contradictions in which he becomes entangled in the process give rise to a suspicion that he is less concerned to 'understand what happened' (p. 17) than to criticise for criticism's sake. Thus the book's end-product is generally disappointing. The author's transparent quest for originality precludes him from presenting a balanced verdict or constructive account. One is forced to conclude that the 'new approach' promised by Taylor at the beginning of his book, with the aim of bringing events into correct perspective, is a wrong turning and an unserviceable interpretation.

Apart from this, the book is dangerous because it could lead to misunderstandings. When Taylor, whose views about Germany are well-known, asserts that the Germans do not bother to deny responsibility for the outbreak of the second world war, as they did after the first world war, but simply unload it on to Hitler (p. 12), one is led to ask whether the author himself is not, with his version, which amounts to an exoneration of Hitler, encouraging a far more dangerous propensity, namely that of revisionism.

The existence of such revisionist tendencies is demonstrated by the following example. An obscure American professor named David L. Hoggan has devoted a lengthy book [4] to proving that Germany was not responsible for the last war, which was 'forced' on her. It is regrettable

[4] David L. Hoggan, *Der erzwungene Krieg: Die Ursachen und Urheber des Zweiten Weltkriegs*. Publications of the Institute of German Post-war History, Volume I (Tübingen, 1961), 1,000 pp. Hoggan belongs to the circle of isolationist-inclined American historians who, led by Professors Charles C. Tansill and Harry E. Barnes, opposed Roosevelt's decision to abandon the isolationist course and bitterly attacked the President's policy.

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that the author, having tried with an evident lack of success to place his work with an American or English publisher, managed to find one in Germany. 'The Publishing House of the German High School Teachers' Newspaper', based in Tübingen, has hitherto confined its sporadic activities to a few neo-nazi publications and a similarly orientated periodical bearing the misleading title *German High School Teachers' Newspaper*. (It has no connection with the German High School Teachers' Association.) The editor of this quarterly is a Dr Herbert Grabert, until 1945 a lecturer at Tübingen University. Grabert is also the Director of an 'Institute of German Post-war History', likewise in Tübingen; the first in its series of publications is a German translation of Hoggan's book.

To anyone reading in Dr Grabert's introduction that the series' avowed aim is 'a study of history according to historical realities', these words sound like mockery when set against the contents of Hoggan's book. Hoggan gives no account of the prior history of the second world war, although with almost nine hundred pages at his disposal he could well have done so. Instead, he systematically constructs his enquiry—with a consistent disregard of factual cohesion—in the service of one, and only one, theory. Hoggan alleges that England conducted a persistent policy of encirclement with the object of strangling the German Reich (p. 72). The policy of appeasement was a subtle 'blind' behind which Great Britain prepared 'military aggression' against Germany (p. 130). Roosevelt's behaviour was, if anything, 'bloodthirstier' (p. 137). The American leaders were determined to come to grips with Germany at all costs (p. 139). Only the French politicians made a stand, abortive though it proved to be, against the British decision to wage a 'preventive war' against Germany (p. 275). Hitler's hopes and endeavours for England's friendship were in vain. England refused to become involved, while he carried out his 'limited and moderate programme of territorial revision' and built up 'the defence against communism' (p. 94).

Hoggan paints the objectives of Hitler's foreign policy in the most pacific colours. He does, on the other hand, concede that Hitler envisaged territorial adjustments, although he carefully avoids the question of the form in which he wanted them. Colonel Hossbach's record of Hitler's conference with his Foreign Minister and military commanders on 5 November 1937 is rejected as a malicious fabrication on the part of Hossbach, who was 'an implacable opponent of Hitler' and exploited 'any illegal and revolutionary means' (p. 116). Hoggan avoids reproducing the proceedings of the conference in detail—a tactic which this 'historian' employs whenever unpleasant facts loom in his path. To Hoggan, the annexation of Austria was 'an act of liberation from a hated puppet government' (p. 134), and he devotes to it only a few colourful sentences which might equally well have appeared in the *Völkischer Beobachter*. The Munich agreement is, to the author, evidence of Hitler's masterly statesmanship. 'He succeeded in winning his victories without provoking armed conflict.' What the incompetence of the League of Nations rendered impossible, namely peaceful territorial revision, became possible through Hitler (p. 120).

Why, then, did the second world war break out? Hoggan's stereotyped answer is that it was the result of a 'will to exterminate' on the part of Hitler's opponents (p. 120). Hitler cherished no enmity towards Poland and was prepared to renounce 'every piece of German soil lost to Poland

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after 1918' (p. 171). His 'patient suggestions' were, however, received by Poland with 'thoroughgoing contempt' (p. 173). The Poles behaved in this manner because they were encouraged to do so by England. 'In reality, the British were planning an attack on Germany, and Germany's conflict with a neighbour, such as Poland, merely provided the pretext for such an attack' (p. 274). '(The British leaders) signified to the Poles that they would furnish them with full military support in the event of their refusing an agreement with Germany' (p. 392). Even when Poland acted along these lines Hitler attempted to negotiate, but 'Halifax's war-policy, accompanied by the covert blessing of Roosevelt and Stalin', won the day (p. 793). That was how the second world war, which Hoggan with unsurpassed paradoxicality calls 'a head-hunt against Hitler and the German people' (p. 793), broke out.

Enough of quotations; one is left speechless, scarcely able to believe in the existence of such nonsense. Not a single document, not a single source is brought forward to substantiate these ridiculous accusations, but Hoggan does not consider this necessary. He has constructed his whole book on these lines and thereby manufactured a brazen historical lie.

RUSSIA AND CHINA

A. R.

FEW events have been so unexpected and, at the same time, so far-reaching for the future history of mankind as the gradually widening divergence of views between the two main communist powers over the past five years. The myth of the monolithic nature of world communism, so assiduously fostered in Stalin's day, has been one of the most important casualties of de-stalinisation. The Hungarian and Polish events of 1956 sapped its strength, but many people could not really believe that the era when communism necessarily spoke with one voice was over. In a world used or inured to the Marxist doctrine of the contradictions of capitalism, the Sino-Soviet conflict piquantly demonstrated that communism has its own set of built-in contradictions.

Mr Zagoria's book* chonicles the development of the quarrel with great care—so great, in fact, that in explaining the doctrinal differences between the two powers it tends to be somewhat repetitive. But this is no serious fault since it will help the general reader to become fully conversant with the points at issue. Moreover, the extent to which the interpretation of ideology is based on historical, national, and political differences is brought out with great clarity. In particular, the change in China's attitude from being 'liberal' and, in communist jargon, 'rightist' in 1956 to a more militant and even Trotskyist posture since 1957 is analysed in detail. The main reason for this change, as Mr Zagoria convincingly shows, was the excessive confidence vis-à-vis the West displayed by China as a result of Soviet successes in the development of cosmic rockets and inter-continental missiles—a confidence which was

* Donald S. Zagoria, **The Sino-Soviet Conflict 1956-1961.** Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. London: Oxford University Press. 1962. 50s.

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in glaring contrast to the more responsible caution of the Russians themselves. In this context, it must be recognised that Khrushchev emerges with far more credit than Mao.

Far from passing judgment on either side, however, the author is content to let the facts speak for themselves and to explain why the Chinese and Soviet attitudes were as they were (e.g. the different stages of economic development, the different historical experience, even to some extent the difference in the nature of the leaders involved). Only rarely does his impartiality slip, as when on p. 172 he refers to China's 'revolutionary hubris'. Nonetheless the reader cannot but conclude from the unadorned presentation of the facts as they are known to Western observers that if China's unrealistic enthusiasm had prevailed over Russian restraint (however qualified in Western eyes), the long-term outlook would have been grim for Russia, China, and the West alike.

Errors and weaknesses are commendably few. The dispute is formulated as between 'left deviation' and 'right deviation', depending on whether Soviet or Chinese spectacles are used. Perhaps the point ought to have been made that doctrinally Khrushchev stands (or would 'moves' be more appropriate?) somewhere between the 'revisionism' of Yugoslavia and the 'dogmatism' of China. Hence the continued attacks on these two concepts in the Soviet press and ideological journals. There should also have been a more detailed examination of the effect of the U.2 incident in 1960 on Soviet and Chinese thinking. Incidentally, this event occurred before the failure of the Summit conference, not after (p. 366).

Looking to the future, Mr Zagoria is rightly cautious on possible exploitation of the situation by the West. Since both the USSR and China are messianically certain that communism will prevail, the challenge to the West is, in a sense, increased by the prospect of two centres of hostility instead of one as heretofore. The only thing for the West to do in these circumstances is to remain strong and confident in its own way of life. In Mr Zagoria's view, the small powers, both in the communist bloc and in the uncommitted areas of the world, are likely to derive most benefit from the Sino-Soviet dispute. As China becomes wealthier they will have another source of aid and support to tap should the existing ones be denied them for political reasons. However much Moscow and Peking attempt to disguise the fact, some measure of polycentrism appears to be here to stay.

THE MECHANISM OF LITERARY CONTROL

Michael Futrell

THE impression that most people have of Soviet literature during the decade following the second world war probably resembles that made by Stalin in 1917, as recorded by Sukhanov: 'a grey blur, looming up now and then dimly and not leaving any trace'. But the literary politics of those years dominated by the spirit of Zhdanov had, and have, a

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ghoulish fascination. Almost every self-respecting sovietologist exercised his antennae by attempting to register the vibrations of the years leading to the eruption of 1956. The clippings from newspaper and periodical articles that clutter our shelves may now be substantially reduced, thanks to the labours of Harold Swayze.*

The core of the book consists of four chapters: The Heyday of Zhdanovism 1946–1952, The Quest for a Middle Way 1953–1955, The Challenge of 1956, and The Drive for 'Consolidation' 1957–1959. Discussion of works of literature is subsidiary to the main aim—'an effort to analyse the methods by which imaginative writing is controlled in the USSR'. The resulting, painstakingly traced, zigzag of decrees, articles, speeches, plenums, congresses, and campaigns is not only immediately useful as a work of reference, but also, by encompassing the Zhdanov-Khrushchev span, provides valuable insights into the underlying process of reciprocation in Soviet literary politics. Events of the last three years may be seen as confirming the author's supposition that there is now an element of deliberateness, of sophisticated though circumscribed manoeuvre, of playing zig against zag, in the disputes of moderates and Stalinists—as the author puts it, 'that the Khrushchev regime might be preparing to perfect and exploit a system of countervailing pressures as a way of preserving the middle course in literature'.

There can be no doubt that refining and modernising the old stick-and-carrot principle, in order to avoid at all costs another 1956, must be a chief concern on the Soviet literary front. Only a few years have passed since 1956, but the literary events of that year and the beginning of the next already seem remote. At one of the lively public discussions, the veteran novelist Vsevolod Ivanov, one of the most ebullient figures of the 1920s, eloquently and pathetically drew the parallel between 1956 and the days of his youth. The more intelligent Soviet bureaucrats must have begun to wonder if they would not soon be indulging the same feeling as their colleague Vasily Petrovich, about whom Nagibin concluded his story in the second volume of *Literaturnaya Moskva*: 'a strange, new, unfamiliar feeling rose and grew within him, penetrating to the tips of his fingers, a feeling of unbearable disgust with himself'.

Embedded in this book between Zhdanovism and Khrushchevism, all this makes a much deeper impression than when it is considered in isolation. Khrushchev and his colleagues certainly learnt from 1956; learnt not only that too much freedom is dangerous, but also that too much repression is dangerous.

The central chapters are preceded by a chapter on the theoretical foundations of literary controls, and followed by one surveying 'the principal instruments of control in literature'. Neither is entirely satisfactory. The first might well have been omitted; it does not seem essential to the book, and is far too condensed a treatment of an intricate topic. The other (chapter six) presents in some detail the structure and functions of the Union of Soviet Writers; but the organs of censorship and various other constraining mechanisms are scarcely mentioned, so that the chapter is only a partial survey of 'the principal instruments of control in literature'. However, these shortcomings do not detract from the value of the principal chapters.

* Harold Swayze, **Political Control of Literature in the USSR 1946–1959.** Harvard University Press. London: Oxford University Press. 1962. 48s.

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One small question remains when the reader has completed this book. Mr Swayze mentions in his preface that he spent the academic year 1958–1959 at Moscow University. This must have been a rare opportunity to enjoy some direct contact, if not with Soviet writers, at any rate with people interested in literature. But the only evidence of this in the book seems to be a footnote, which does contain a striking piece of information: 'In 1959 an editor of a leading Moscow literary journal estimated, in conversation with the author, that during the preceding four years approximately one hundred persons had been excluded from the Writers Union.' One must regret that the months in Moscow do not seem to have provided any more such direct glimpses into the Soviet literary world. Perhaps, quite reasonably, discretion restrained the author from attempting to cultivate literary contacts; but at several points in his book, for example during his discussion of the persecution of Pasternak towards the end of 1958, one feels that reference to personally observed manifestations of opinion might have made his rigorous exposition more vivid without damaging its scholarly qualities.

LATIN AMERICA

Boris Goldenberg

TO commemorate the 150th anniversary of Latin America's wars of independence, the Moscow Institute of World Economics and International Relations (of the Academy of Sciences) organised a special session. The main lectures given on this occasion, revised and enlarged, have been published in book form under the title *The national-liberation movement of contemporary Latin America.** It contains a short general introduction, three papers devoted to general topics ('The moving forces of the national-liberation struggle', 'Problems of the economic development of Latin America', 'The ideological heritage of the Wars of Independence'), five contributions on national and regional problems (Cuba, Venezuela, Chile, Central America, and Mexico), and one on the economic collaboration of Latin America with the socialist countries.

Measured by academic standards, the contents are rather poor. There is nothing new in them; anyone who has read earlier books by Russian authors is bound to get the impression of '*déjà vu*'. There is a simple 'preordained' plot, filled out by a one-sided selection of appropriate facts, the story presented in black and white and with no disturbing subtleties:

Once upon a time there was a villain, Spanish colonialism. The peoples of Latin America rose up against this exploiting enemy but were betrayed by their local oligarchs, helped by the Catholic Church, and were delivered into the hands of a far more formidable villain, modern imperialism. The imperialists, especially the Yanquis, transformed Latin America into a colonial area, obstructed its sound economic development,

* **Natsionalno-Osvoboditelnoe Dvizhenie v Latinskoy Amerike na sovremennom etape** (Moscow, 1961), 297 pp.; edited by V. Ya. Avarin and M. V. Danilevich.

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deformed its economies into monocultures (although the imperialists are also blamed for their recent investments in Latin American industries working for the national markets (p. 95)), reaped huge profits ('the leading circles of the USA got a large part of their wealth from robbing the Latin American peoples', p. 97), and, with the help of the oligarchs and local 'compradores', maintained governments of more or less bloodthirsty dictators (Peron, with whose followers the communists are collaborating in Argentina, is mentioned alongside Rosas, Porfirio Diaz, Perez Jimenez and Batista, the old ally of the communists). 'Peron suppressed the democratic liberties and sold the national wealth to foreign monopolists' (p. 112). Still, some development there was, and from it arose the forces of liberation: the national bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, the peasants, and, above all, the working class, whose growing revolutionary ardour is shown by the strike movements and which is led by its recognised vanguard, the communist parties. All the other political forces are unable to attain true independence and to crush feudalism, as is demonstrated inter alia by Cardenas, whose administration was the most progressive Mexico ever had, but which nevertheless 'did not solve the fundamental tasks of the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution' (p. 251). Only a united front of all anti-imperialist elements under the leadership of the working class and the communists can win genuine liberation, as is proved by Cuba. The Cuban revolution demonstrated 'the truth of the marxist-leninist theory about the extraordinary importance of the unity of all revolutionary forces' (p. 63), and its victory, resulting in a 'formerly unheard-of economic progress' (p. 105), opened a new age of freedom and abundance, based on the help of the socialist countries.

The simple repetition of the 'black legend' about the Spaniards is hardly adequate; nor is the characterisation of the Wars of Independence as 'popular-democratic' revolutions. Apart from Mexico, they were mostly revolutions led by small upper-class minorities, whose backers were interested in putting themselves in the place of the Spaniards. Bolivar complained loudly enough about the lack of popular support. There is no warrant for the (incidentally quite unmarxist) idea that, left to the themselves, the countries of Latin America would have developed into modern industrial societies. If 'imperialism', that is, the inevitable preponderance of developed economies over underdeveloped ones, unchecked as it was, led to a 'deformation' of these economies, it is also true that such monocultures existed long before the age of modern imperialism and that imperialism contributed to what industrial development there has after all been in Latin America. One of the authors admits that the progress of many Latin American countries has in some respects been greater than that of other underdeveloped regions. 'With respect to machine-building, the percentage of total world production represented by all the underdeveloped countries fell between 1948 and 1957 from 4 to 2·6 per cent, while that of Latin America rose from 0·8 to 1·4 per cent' (p. 22). Nationalism and the revolt against imperialism are, precisely, the result of development and not of stagnation. The working class is hardly anywhere in the forefront of the 'liberation struggle'. Where it is, as in Argentina, it is led by Peronists; and the communist parties are growing in Latin America

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at a slower pace than in other underdeveloped regions. The victorious Castro revolution was not led by communists, had less active support from the workers than from other social classes and strata, and has brought neither freedom nor welfare, contrary to the rosy fictions elaborated by dignified Russian academicians.

The inadequacy of the ' class ' categories is clearly visible and becomes glaring when applied to the ' national bourgeoisie ', which is sometimes equated with all capitalists working for the home market, sometimes with the petty bourgeoisie, and sometimes with any bourgeois group which happens to be opposed to the Yanquis. There is no mention of the enormous population increase, which produces so many difficulties, or of the problems of ' acculturation ' of primitive peoples, of the ' revolution of rising expectations ', of the special importance of young intellectuals and of the masses of rootless people to whom no class-position can be ascribed precisely because they find themselves outside the economy.

This does not mean that the communists of different shades have no chances in Latin America. They have. But their direct or indirect (Castro!) successes demonstrate the falseness of the marxist-leninist tenet, that without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.

LEGAL MARXISM

Victor S. Frank

IN France the great cleavage caused by 1789 affects men's attitudes and thoughts to this day. The issue of the Revolution is still being fought out there under various guises.

In Russia a similar effect has been produced by the revolution wrought by Peter the Great. To this day every great political and social debate in Russia hinges on the vexed problem of Russia's standing vis-à-vis Europe.

Is Russia an autochthonous entity with a destiny of her own, chosen by God or by the dialectical process of history to work out her own salvation and, by the same token, the salvation of mankind? Is Russian Orthodoxy the one and only true Christian faith, and is Russia therefore the Third Rome? Are the Russians the God-fearing people *par excellence*? And can socialism be built in one country—provided that country happens to be Russia? These are some of the questions asked and answered in the affirmative by men who, whatever their convictions and affiliations, may all be described as Peter's opponents. In this respect Dostoevsky and Chernyshevsky, Alexander III and Stalin are brothers under the skin.

Peter's followers, on the other hand, have been claiming throughout the last two and a half centuries that Russia is an integral part of Europe, that she had been tragically severed from it by a number of fortuitous historical catastrophes, that without an organic connection with her roots she will wither away, and that she naturally gravitates towards them.

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Of course, real life attitudes are never as clear cut as abstract historiosophical schemes. Thus, the influential movement or, rather, frame of mind which goes under the name of *narodnichestvo* (Populism), and which dominated the minds of the radical Russian intelligentsia in the last quarter of the 19th century, was nationalist and messianic. It saw the Russian *narod*, people, and, more specifically, the Russian peasant, as a redeeming force in the world. Yet the intellectual and moral inspiration of the *narodniki* came from the West, from the Saint-Simonists, Fourier, Owen, and, at second hand, from Alexander Herzen.

The quandary which the *narodniki* found themselves in as a result of this mixed provenance is well formulated in Mr Kindersley's incisive scholarly study * of one particular episode of Russia's modern history:

> The Western varieties of Socialism—he writes (p. 7)—had been conceived in an industrial society, and the human material on which they were to operate consisted for the most part of proletarian workers. Transferred to Russia, such ideas might have lacked any basis in the realities of Russian life, had it not been for one thing: the *obshchina*, or Russian peasant commune.

This institution, first described in loving detail by an intelligent German observer, the Baron von Haxthausen, became to the *narodniki* the basis of their socialist faith. They clung to it as a guard against the danger which, in their eyes, threatened Russia. It was the danger that Russia might turn into that very type of corrupt society against which the Western socialists were protesting. The *obshchina* could, in Chernyshevsky's words, 'maintain the beneficial principle of communal land-ownership, and save us from the terrible ulcer of proletarianism in our village population'. In short, capitalism could be avoided, evolution could be telescoped, socialism could be reached in one great leap.

The mapping out of the road to socialism was the immediate issue on which the first Marxists in Russia clashed with the *narodniki* in the 1890s. The Marxists were, of course, extreme Westerners—not only by virtue of the purely European provenance of their Gospel; not only by virtue of their Western (especially German) schooling, but also by virtue of the content of their theory, which demanded that Russia should embark on the road of capitalist development and become an industrialised Western country. Only in such a way, Marxists ('legal' or 'illegal') maintained, could she achieve socialism in its proper form.

In his book Mr Kindersley analyses the pros and cons of the arguments adduced on both sides with great care and objectivity, though there is no doubt that his own sympathies lie with that extraordinary band of young scholars who were to be called 'legal Marxists' (legal, that is, in the sense that they chose not to emigrate, but to fight it out in Russia and to clothe their arguments in a form acceptable to the censorship: popular etymology later on fastened a more general meaning to the adjective 'legal'). For it was an extraordinarily gifted group. And the paradox of the intellectual development of this group lies in the fact that after routing their populist opponents and clearing the field of

* Richard Kindersley, **The First Russian Revisionists: A Study of 'Legal Marxism' in Russia.** Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1962. 38s.

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revolutionary endeavour to Social-Democrats, the leaders of 'legal Marxism' themselves gradually gave up their doctrinaire Marxist positions and moved on to completely new ground. Of the small group of 'legal Marxists', one, Sergey Bulgakov, became in the event the most brilliant Orthodox theologian of our century, while two others, Nikolay Berdyaev and Simon Frank, became leaders of that remarkable revival of idealist and religious philosophy in Russia which, in the years to come, may be viewed as an event of immense significance.

Mr Kindersley has covered a wide ground in his research; has interviewed survivors of the early stages of Russian Marxism; has delved deep into newspaper files and private archives. Particularly valuable are his short biographical sketches of the leading protagonists. He appears to have been fascinated by that odd man out of Russian politics, Peter Struve, a man who, though he moved from Marxism via liberalism to conservative monarchism, always remained faithful to himself, a man great enough to stand and let the historical scene shift around him. Of course, Mr Kindersley's study covers only about ten years of Struve's long academic and political career, but even this short glimpse is sufficient to let the reader sense the unusual stature of the man.

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